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SFX

#233

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WHO!**

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COLEMAN TALKS TO SFX!**

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series and 50th anniversary secrets

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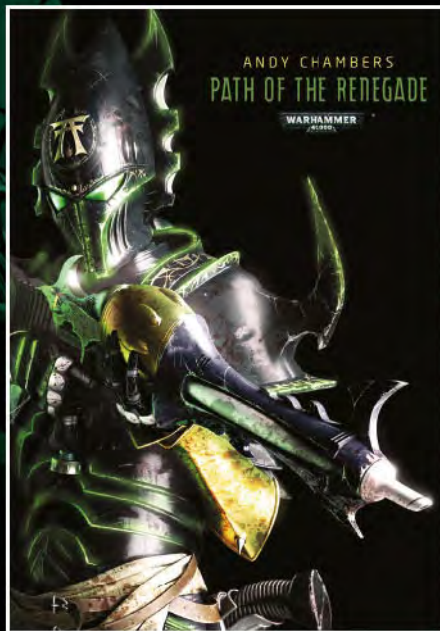
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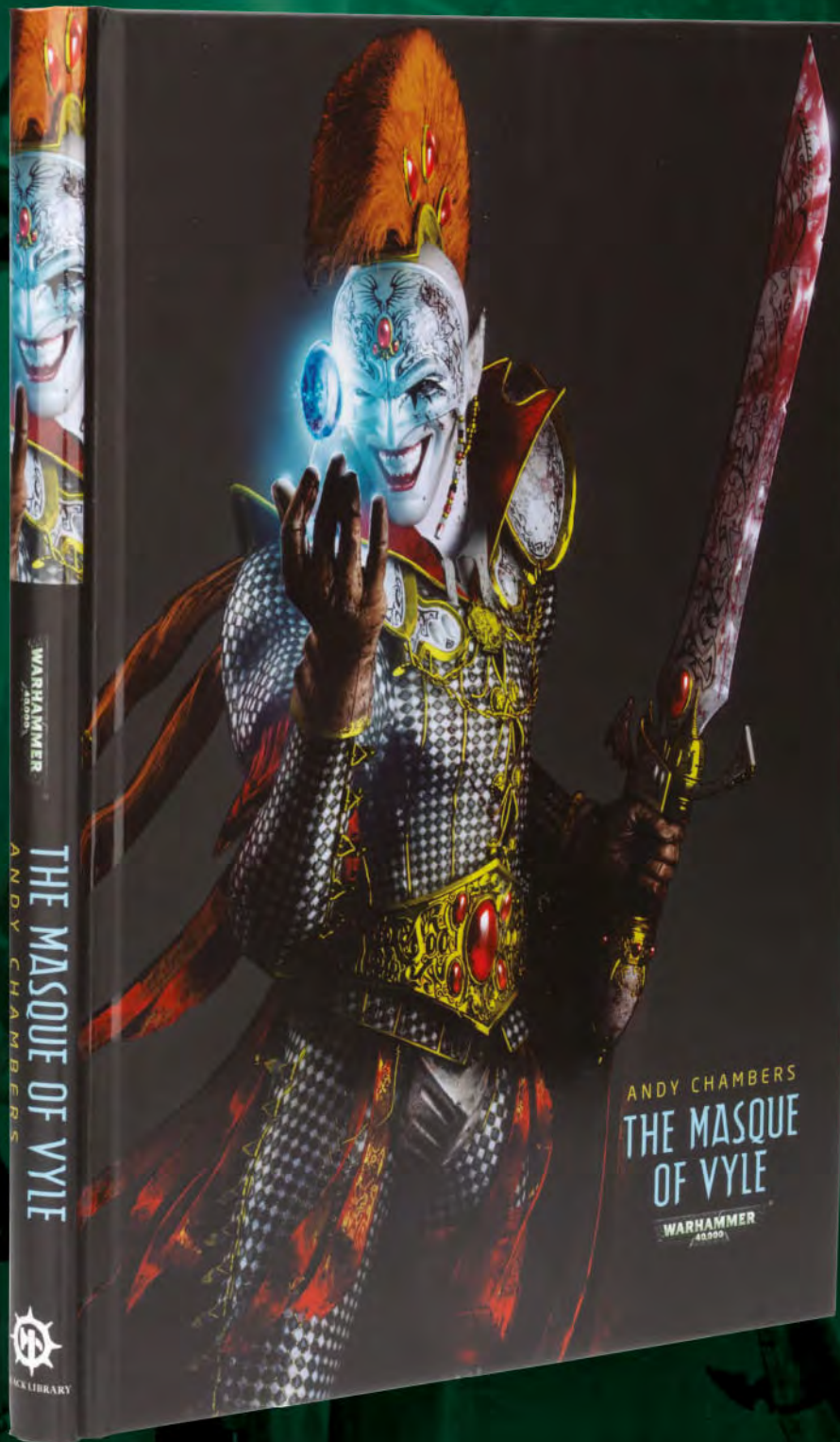
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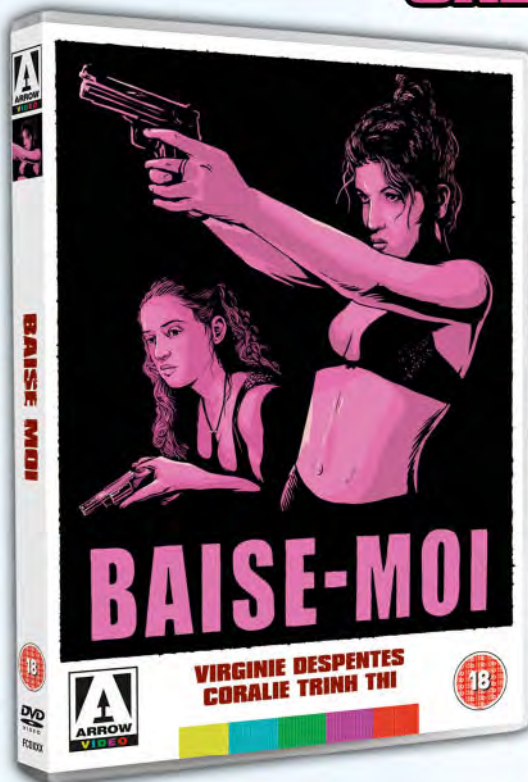
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THE INSIDE SKINNY

What your *SFX* chums are thinking about...

DAVE BRADLEY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

RAVES

I took a break from *Skyrim* (310 hours in!) to play *XCOM: Enemy Unknown*. What a great blast of turn-based nostalgia, perfectly modernised!

Very sad that *Being Human* is ending.

RANTS

I love *Star Wars* and I'm excited about the new films... but all these spin-offs? Slow down, Disney. Get *Episode VII* right first.



RICHARD EDWARDS DEPUTY EDITOR

RAVES

Aside from a *Raiders*-era Steven Spielberg, I can't think of anyone I'd rather have directing a *Star Wars* movie than JJ Abrams. He can handle storytelling, he can do action and - most importantly - he loves *Star Wars*.

Intrigued to see what ITV does with the new *Thunderbirds*. Will *International Rescue* still be relevant in 2015?



NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

I had a magical day at TV Centre for *An Adventure In Space And Time*, the BBC Two drama about the creation of *Doctor Who*. So many wonderful ghosts in that place.

RIP

Sad to hear of the passing of movie make-up artist Stuart Freeborn. He was one of the genuine wizards of old-school cinema.



RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

RAVES

Enjoyed Gareth Roberts's novelisation of "Shada". Kraags rock. "The Pirate Planet" and "City Of Death" next, please!

After getting the complete box set for Christmas, nearly finished my big James Bond rewatch. Loving it, in the main. *Cornery* is magnificent, Dalton - and his flicks - are pretty good, and every Bond girl is wonderful.



IAN BERRIMAN REVIEWS EDITOR

RAVES

The second series of *Black Mirror* has been stunning. The number of idiots on Twitter who completely missed the point of "White Bear" was dismaying, though...

Discovery of the month: two *Star Trek*-themed punk bands from the '90s: The Shatners and The Vulcaneers. <http://bit.ly/TrekGarage>

RANTS

Gutted that there'll be no more *Being Human*.



JORDAN FARLEY STAFF WRITER

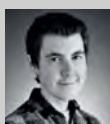
RAVES

Supernatural season eight is the best the show's been in years. Catch up before it starts in the UK if you gave up after season five.

The *Skyrim* DLC is finally out on PS3. There goes my evenings/weekends/all my free time.

JJ Abrams and Valve are teaming up to make *Portal/Half Life* movies. Best. News. Ever.

Very excited about *Atlantis*.



JON COATES ART EDITOR

RAVES

Very excited by the JJ Abrams *Star Wars* news.

The *SW* spin-offs could be interesting too. *R5-D4: The Movie* would surely be a banker, or perhaps one based around the Cantina with a story similar to *Coyote Ugly*. *Coyote Ugnought*, anyone?

Love the über-retro Ice Warrior design. Surely *The Wolverine* would benefit from a couple of musical numbers?



CATHERINE KIRKPATRICK DEPUTY ART EDITOR

RAVES

Loved *Wreck-It Ralph* - a witty and beautifully animated treat. Really want to sample the sweet-coated delights from Sugar Rush land.

Enjoyed *Ruby Sparks*, it was a refreshing take on the usual rom-com.

The return of *Black Mirror* has been great; loved Hayley Atwell's performance in the first ep.



DAVE GOLDER ONLINE EDITOR

RAVES

Thanks to *Pointless* for giving me (and presumably many other *SFX* readers) the opportunity to feel really, really smug with a "who played what vampires" round (yes, I got all 12) but...

RANTS

After refusing to accept "Count Dracula" when the answer was *Dracula*, they really shouldn't have accepted "Interview With A Vampire."



ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

RAVES

What is it with ridiculously long films right now? Bring back the interval, please! I mean, *The Hobbit* nearly became a three-wee movie for me. The only thing that prevented this was the fact I was sitting next to a bloke who looked like a cross between a cage fighter and a lump of concrete, slurping a drink the size of an Ewok! Bring back the ice cream girls...



NARIN BAHAR FREELANCE WRITER

RAVES

The Superbowl. No, I'm not a secret sports fan but the *Iron Man*, *Star Trek* and *World War Z* trailers brightened a grey day with thoughts of summer.

RANTS

The BBC seemed to bury *Being Human* even before they said it hadn't been renewed, thanks to a shocking lack of pre-series publicity.



JAYNE NELSON FREELANCE WRITER

RAVES

Supernatural has a ninth season! Woohoo! Usually shows that reach such a milestone are starting to suffer creatively, but thankfully this one's experiencing a renaissance.

RANTS

I'm already bored of hearing people talking about the new *Star Wars* movies and they're still years away. This bodes well...



This is a special issue for me personally. My inaugural edition of *SFX* as a member of the team, the first time my words defaced this page of the magazine, was issue 133 - making issue 233 something of a significant milestone. That's a little under eight years, long enough to be US president twice, and the sci-fi landscape has evolved a great deal in that time. Some wonderful projects have come and gone (*Serenity* on the big screen, *Fringe* on the small) while others thrive and adapt to this day: *Doctor Who*, *Supernatural*, *Star Trek*, the current run of Marvel movies, *The Walking Dead*. My first day on the job we chatted *Star Wars Episode III*... and now in 2013 the prequels are distant memories and we're yakking about a new era of *Star Wars* magic.

It's easy to forget how much our lifestyles and hobbies have changed since then. Bear in mind that YouTube didn't launch publicly until the end of 2005 so there was no such thing when I first sat in the Captain's chair - and no Facebook or Twitter either.

All these things have brought sci-fi fans closer than ever, making it easy to celebrate our love of this growing, thriving, evolving genre. Thank you for reading and enjoying *SFX*, I love the sense of community that exists around the magazine and website. Here's to many more years together! Live long and prosper,

Dave

Dave Bradley, Editor-in-Chief
@SFXDaveB

PHOTO BY JAMES LOOKER

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RED ALERT

THE FUTURE FIRST

edited by Richard Edwards

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ORDINARY JOES
Can *GI Joe: Retaliation*
surpass the *Rise Of Cobra*?
Let's hope so.



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**THE GADGET
NO-SHOW**
Tracy Spiridakos goes
tech-free in *Revolution*.



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**MEYER VS
ALIENS**
Twilight author takes on
ETs in *The Host*.



TV SPOILER THREAT

SFX's unique system
to help you decide
whether a news story
is safe to read.

**GREEN: SAFE FOR
ALL VIEWERS**

It's spoiler
free for folk
watching at
the pace of
the UK's five former
analogue TV channels.
(Waiting for the DVD?
We advise caution.)

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EXCLUSIVE
DIRECTOR
INTERVIEW

DARK SKIES

Space Invaders

The alien horror movie that's not to be
confused with the short-lived TV show

THERE'S A REASON WHY HOLLYWOOD'S HORROR
output ain't as scary as it used to be and, according to *Dark
Skies* writer/director Scott Stewart, it's nothing to do with
money-hungry studios chasing the lucrative 12A audience.
"Visual effects aren't scary," he tells Red Alert. "Or an
over-reliance on those techniques aren't, because you
intuitively know it's not happening and you disengage from
what's happening on screen. There's nothing more delicious
in scary movies than the slowly tightening screw, so that's
what we're after here."

For Stewart, a former visual effects artist on the likes of
The Lost World, *Sin City* and *Iron Man*; and the director of ➔



Closer Encounters...

...OF THE WORD KIND WITH
SCOTT STEWART

CHILD'S PLAY

Young Sam (6) and Jesse (13) Barrett are played by the impressively monickered Kadan Rockett and Dakota Goyo. The former makes his big-screen debut here. The latter already landed a leading role in *Real Steel* and starred as the young Thor. "I was very fortunate. That's why you work very hard with your casting director to pick the right child actor, because you can have big trouble if you're not careful. Kadan is remarkable. The very first day of rehearsals we were all shocked to realise he had memorised the whole script. He's like a little Rain Man!"



"Those bad dreams you've been having about your brother being a god of thunder...?"

J JONAH SCEPTICISM

Top character actor JK Simmons stars as a man who helps David and Lacey after his own close encounter. "He's modelled after the people who run blogs and websites about alien experiences, but it was a role JK brought to life with the idea someone who has been in the trenches for too long would be feeling a sense of resignation," Stewart explains. "You usually get someone professorial or very quirky, but JK plays it tired, which makes what he says scarier because it's so real sounding."

THE PARENT TRAP

Keri Russell and Josh Hamilton star as Lacey and Daniel Barrett, struggling parents who get pushed to the edge by oppressive ETs. "Another great thing about making movies at this lower budget level is that you're not required to cast particular people because they're gonna get on a certain number of talk shows. You just cast who you think is best for the role. Relatability was important to me as a core value of the movie, so it was important in that we didn't just cast people who looked like they'd fallen off the cover of a fashion magazine."

THE NAME GAME

So, has *Dark Skies* got anything to do with *Dark Skies*, or what? "Yeah, I never saw that show because I don't watch a lot of television," says Stewart. "It was only after we announced the movie I read online people were like 'Is this related to that *Dark Skies* TV show?' and I went 'Oh, there was a *Dark Skies* TV show?' In the movie the title is pretty metaphoric."



stylised, effects-driven action flicks *Legion* and *Priest*, *Dark Skies* marks a significant change of pace; less world-building, more home-making. It's the story of an average family who find their lives descending into chaos after they come under attack from a force beyond their comprehension. Think *Kramer Vs Kramer* vs *Aliens*.

"I think the movie's a little unusual because it's a lot more grounded and realistic in its approach," Stewart explains. "It has got one foot firmly in the family drama camp, it takes its time and that kind of slow burn makes people unaware, or they're not sure where the scares are gonna come as much."

Dark Skies might deviate from the mould that Stewart established with his first two films as director (for one, Paul Bettany doesn't kick vampire/monster ass this time), but it's the latest in a line of modest budget domestic horror movies from producer Jason Blum, the man behind the *Paranormal Activity* franchise. "One of the great things about these movies that Jason Blum has produced is they're very filmmaker-driven and they happen very quickly. I think *Sinister* was six months from script to screen, and we finished filming in August, which is really compelling as a filmmaker," says Stewart. "You're able to keep your energy and keep focus. There's a lot less time for people to muck around with it."

While *Dark Skies* didn't have quite the same swift turn around as *Sinister*, it didn't take long for Stewart to scribble down on paper a story that had been bouncing around inside his head for many years.

"I had been thinking about parents that had become notorious in the public eye for being accused, but not convicted for crimes against their children. The public is quite sceptical of their denials and yet the authorities were

never able to prove anything against them. What if there was a supernatural angle to it, but they were telling the truth? Of course no one would believe it. That seemed like a really interesting problem for a scary movie.

"That was dovetailing around with some ideas I had on the way the banking crisis was putting a lot of economic distress on the suburban family, which can put a lot of strain on relationships. *Dark Skies* was the desire to tell a story about a family living in the suburbs with two kids and dealing with a lot of the issues people are dealing with today. What those disturbances end up doing is greatly exaggerating all the anxieties that they're feeling. They give voice to them and make them much worse. So in that context the movie's pretty psychological."

Psychological it may be, but that doesn't mean we won't be seeing any Little Green Men hopping over white picket fences. Sort of.

"For me the Greys are a force of nature. One of the ideas in the movie is that they exist and have existed for a long time and they are what creates chaos in our lives, they are the darkness that's always there. They're more than a physical presence. You do see things,

"More often than not nowadays, people are disappointed by the alien"

clearly, but more often than not nowadays – *Prometheus* is a perfect example, or *Battleship* – people are disappointed by what the alien looks like. So from the conception of the piece, I wanted to take a very different approach. We came up with specific rules of how you would see them. They're always seen in silhouette, for example. It is a bit of a twist on the iconic design. It's only similar in the sense it's humanoid in shape.

When people discuss visitation experiences, a lot of the time what they describe is a nightmarish presence that is nearly impossible to see.

"So that's what I wanted to achieve, which is if you were to stop watching the movie and go online and start looking around you would see something consistent with what you've experienced in the movie. Once again, the movie takes a bit of a different approach." **SFX**

Dark Skies beams into UK cinemas on Friday 5 April 2013, courtesy of Momentum Pictures.

A watched alien never arrives.



► **SGI-FACT** Having recently returned to wrestling, the Rock is the current WWE champion.

GI JOE: RETALIATION

Toy Soldiers

Bruce Willis and the Rock enlist for sequel/reboot

► ACTION MEN

"Bruce Willis and the Rock, it's just a fun combination and contrast," laughs Chu. "Bruce Willis talks so quietly. It's just his thing. But it's so badass and cool that if he did anything more it would ruin who he is. The Rock loves military; he loves Joe; he loves the idea of what it means to be a hero. That's really what we were trying to answer - whether you're a ninja, in politics, or a military guy, what does it mean to go against an opposition that looks too daunting to go against to save the people you love?"

THE REACTION OF LONGTIME GI

Joe fans to Stephen Sommers' 2009 *The Rise Of Cobra* (aka *Sienna Miller's World Of Leather*) was frosty to say the least, so the Hasbro toy franchise's return to the big screen was hardly a given. But proof you can't keep a good soldier down comes in the form of *Retaliation*, a follow-up that serves as both a continuation and reboot of the screen saga, pitting a new squad - led by Roadblock (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) and Joseph Colton (Bruce Willis), the legendary general from whom all other Joes take their name - against archenemy Cobra and its Hiss tanks.

"We just wanted to set a new tone," director Jon Chu tells Red Alert. "What's great about the GI Joe world is it's spread out, with tons of different characters in tons of different areas. The cartoon always jumped into different places anyway. So it was fun to just say, 'This is just one segment. Let's explore *this* world...' and set things up for other stories that maybe the last movie veered away from."

"We heard the storm of desire for certain characters," adds producer Lorenzo di Bonaventura. "So some of the characters are in the movie partly because the fan base was saying, 'Come on, I want to see Lady Jaye!'"

Chu says the studio's last-minute decision to postpone *Retaliation*'s initial summer 2012 release by nine months did not result in any reshoots, but allowed his crew time to perfect the film's setpieces, as well as its converted 3D.

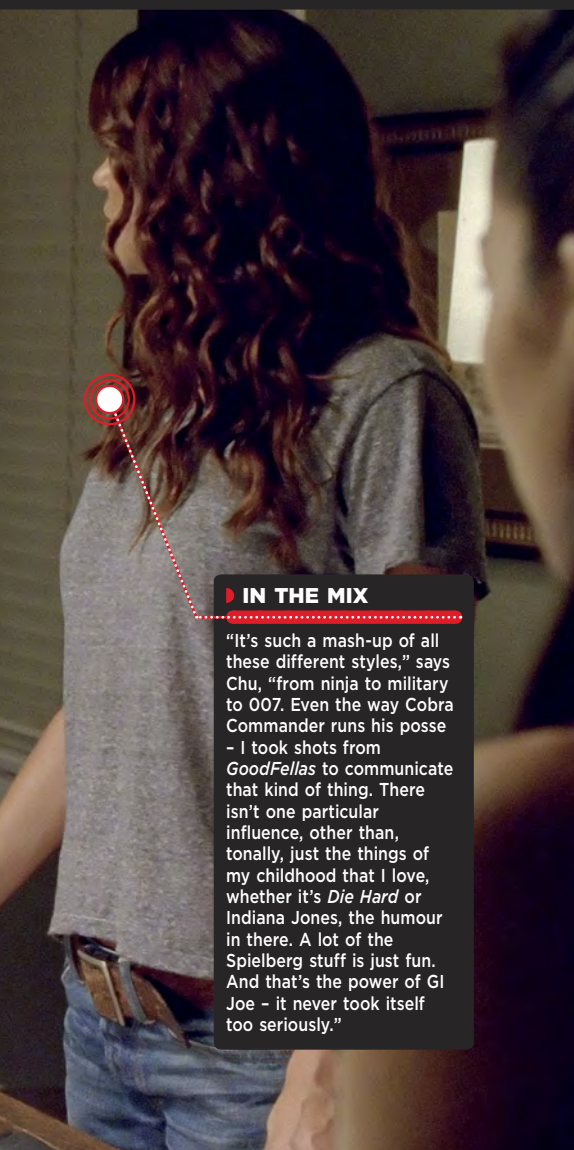
"When I was hired for the job, I thought I was going to shoot a 3D movie. I'd just done two others [*Step Up 2*, *Step Up 3D*], but we weren't getting the resources at the time. You're running a marathon and you get to the end, and all of the sudden it gets pulled from you... I had my reservations about 3D conversions. Then I went to all the different companies and saw all the changes in the last two years. That's when we dug in." **SFX**

GI Joe: Retaliation is released by Paramount on Wednesday 27 March.

► HITTING NEW HEIGHTS

The film's biggest setpiece is a ninja battle set in the Himalayas. "As a guy who loves big action scenes... it was utterly singular," explains Di Bonaventura. "And it goes on for a long time. It's probably the second act break. I think we shot something like 50 days plus just on that, so it's a real big feast. I think it's 10 or 12 minutes long."

One-time Darth Maul Ray Park masked up again, as Snake Eyes.



IN THE MIX

"It's such a mash-up of all these different styles," says Chu, "from ninja to military to 007. Even the way Cobra Commander runs his posse - I took shots from *GoodFellas* to communicate that kind of thing. There isn't one particular influence, other than, tonally, just the things of my childhood that I love, whether it's *Die Hard* or Indiana Jones, the humour in there. A lot of the Spielberg stuff is just fun. And that's the power of *GI Joe* - it never took itself too seriously."



Data Flow

AWARDS ROUND UP



NEWBIES

► 5. 4. 3. 2. 1! **Thunderbirds** are go (again)! ITV has announced that a reinvention of the classic Gerry Anderson show will hit screens in 2015. The 26-part series will be a "unique mix of CGI animation and live-action model sets".

► BBC One has confirmed what'll be replacing *Merlin* in its autumn schedules. **Atlantis** is the creation of *Misfits* mastermind Howard Overman, who's collaborating with *Merlin* showrunners Johnny Capps and Julian Murphy on a 13-part series based in that famous watery land of myth. Syfy, meanwhile, has ordered a four-episode, Ridley Scott-produced adaptation of Philip K Dick's

The Man In The High Castle - a project previously at the Beeb.

► Further back in the production process, *Walking Dead* channel AMC is developing interstellar war show **Incurcion** (see page 20), an adaptation of Dan Simmons' **The Terror**, and vampiric tale **Vlad Dracula**, a collaboration between *Babylon 5*'s J Michael Straczynski and *Xena* producer Rob Tapert. On the web, Amazon is making the leap from retail to scripted (comedy) drama with a series based on **Zombieland**.

Continued on p16.

DON'T QUOTE ME



"I'm mostly excited, a little bit nervous and aware of trying not to let people down"

Steven Moffat's feelings on marshalling *Doctor Who*'s 50th anniversary.

my sci-fi

BECAUSE CELEBRITIES LIKE SF TOO

Ade Adepitan

Wheelchair basketball player Ade Adepitan helped win bronze for Great Britain in the 2004 Paralympics. His TV credits include *EastEnders* and *Desperados*, and he commentated for Channel 4 on the London Paralympics.



FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY MOVIES

Tough question! The first film that blew me away was *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, when my fascination for aliens began. *Blade Runner*'s incredible and *Terminator* has always been special because of its darkness. My favourite would have to be the original *Planet Of The Apes*. It had everything - space and time travel, politics and the classic scene with the destroyed Statue of Liberty. Oh and power-mad, crazed, talking apes - you couldn't ask for anything more.

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY TV

Ridiculously tough. I've always been a *Doctor Who* fan, I grew up watching the mad Tom Baker and K-9. Right now I love *Game Of Thrones* - it's awesome, although season two hasn't been great. However I'll have to go for *The X-Files*. It had some great storylines, and left you constantly thinking, "The truth is out there!" Oh, flippin' 'eck! I forgot *Deep Space Nine*. This is crazy!

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY BOOKS

I read so much it's difficult to remember everything. On *Desert Island Discs*, it was a toss-up between EE "Doc" Smith's *Lensman* and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. Today I'm gonna go for Pullman.

FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY GUILTY PLEASURES

Don't know if the original *V* counts as a guilty pleasure? I was 13, and it came on late, adding to the thrill factor. It increased my fascination about life on other planets and how they would react to us. Oh yeah, I'm the only person I know who likes *AI* - it's got some really powerful scenes.



► **SGI-FACT** Gaiman's co-creator on *Neverwhere* was Lenny Henry.



NEVERWHERE

Going Underground

Neil Gaiman's classic adventure in London Below gets BBC radio adap

EXCLUSIVE
DIRECTOR
INTERVIEW

THERE ARE TWO LONDONS: OUR

London Above and London Below, a fantastical world where the capital comes alive. The Earl entertains in his court, the Knightsbridge asks a toll of life and the Angel Islington stalks up and down his citadel halls. It's populated by those who've fallen through the cracks of life – those such as businessman, Richard Mayhew.

Of all the storytelling media that could have potentially handled the imaginative scope of Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*, mid-'90s BBC television was arguably one of the least well equipped. That's why the original TV version of the author's urban fantasy couldn't really soar to the heights of the author's own novel adaptation that followed. Now, however, the story might just be getting the treatment it deserves: a star-studded Radio 4 "movie".

"The TV version was such a brave effort," says Dirk Maggs, director of the new radio adaptation, "but the trouble was that it's such a big vision – it really needed a big budget for effects and so on to realise it. We were able to push the boat out even further. I'm not trying to blow our trumpet at the expense of anyone else, but I think radio was a good place for it to go for it – especially with the cast."

Maggs, who's made his name turning stories such as *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* and *Dirk Gently* into big radio productions,

assembled a big-name cast – stars like James McAvoy as everyman Mayhew, whose life in London Above ceases to exist when he bumps into Door, played by *The Fades'* Natalie Dormer. In his quest to get his identity back, he must seek help from the Old Bailey (Bernard Cribbins), the Earl of Earl's Court (Christopher Lee, right) and Benedict Cumberbatch's brooding Angel of Islington, all the while pursued by horrifying duo Vandemar and Croup (David Schofield and Anthony Head). "When we had the read-through," he says, "I think everyone was amazed to be in the same room as each other! Everyone had their camera phones out taking pictures of everybody. Benedict, James... Everybody."

According to Maggs, they first drew up a "dream cast" but it was Gaiman fan McAvoy who helped them realise it – a stellar signing that made all the other dominos fall. With such a cast in place, however, it was then up to Maggs to adapt the fantastical ideas from the "author's preferred text" version of

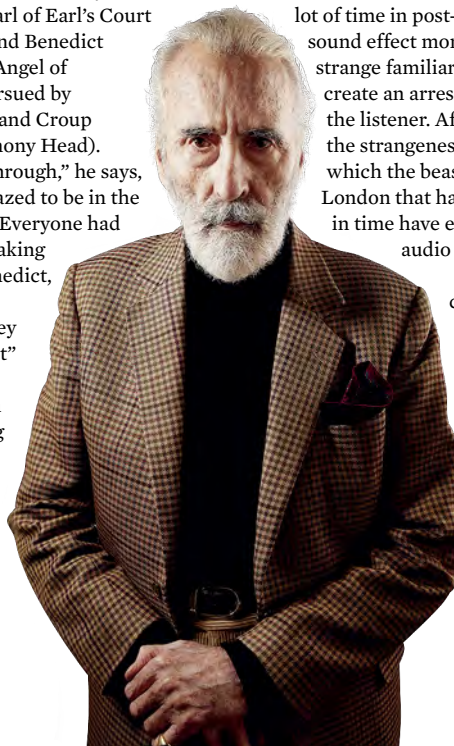
the book – which also includes the discarded prologue featured in the appendix.

"In some ways it was easier to adapt than, say, comic books, but long passages of description really aren't so easy if you're under time constraints," explains Maggs. "I spent a lot of time in post-production coming up with sound effect montages trying to explain the strange familiarity of London Below – to create an arresting image in the mind of the listener. After all: how do you capture the strangeness of the labyrinth within which the beast lurks where old bits of London that have slipped through cracks in time have ended up? This was the most

audio detail I've ever worked in.

"In terms of scale, it's certainly the biggest audio movie I've worked on. Most of all, though, it's just a really good story well told – well told by Neil, and hopefully well told by us." **SFX**

Neverwhere comes to Radio 4 in mid-March with an hour-long special and then five half-hour episodes.



GAME OF THRONESSM

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AFTERLIFE

25

Denise Crosby

Lt Tasha Yar in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*



She may have only been a regular for a single season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* – before being killed off by a malevolent oil slick – but Denise Crosby's Enterprise Security Chief Tasha Yar still left her mark on Starfleet. Crosby returned for guest appearances in subsequent seasons, and produced and hosted documentaries *Trekkies* and *Trekkies II*. Her other genre credits include Stephen King adaptation *Pet Sematary* and Tobe Hooper's *Mortuary*. "I had an absolute blast working on *Star Trek*," she says. "The set was always light-hearted and everyone got along with one another. I was privileged to act alongside such a great group of people."

► What's the strangest request that you have ever had from a fan?

In one or two cases I've refused to sign certain body parts, for reasons which I will have to leave to your imagination [laughs]. I also met a gentleman who had a Tasha Yar picture completely tattooed on his back. He told me that he wanted me to put my face right up against it for a picture. That was quite strange as well.

► Would you like to play the role of Tasha Yar again?

Oh god, yeah – I would love to. JJ Abrams, if you're reading this, please call me!

► Were you a SF/fantasy fan before you starred in the show?

Absolutely, in fact I grew up with *The Twilight Zone*, *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* and *The Outer Limits*. I was always a huge fan.

► Did you get any souvenirs from the set?

I don't have anything. I think the first thing the producers did, after they gave me my going-away cake, was rip my communicator's badge off [laughs]. It was a case of "this is ours and you won't be needing it any more".

► What would it say on Tasha's tombstone?

She made you smile.

Aerial Assault

SF TV ROUND UP

NEWBIES (CONT)

► The CW has commissioned pilots for its remake of *The Tomorrow People* and the *Hunger Games*-ish *The Selection*; HBO's given a greenlight to *The Leftovers*; NBC has said yes please to supernatural Western *The Sixth Gun*, and the JJ Abrams-produced *Believe*; Fox has asked for another JJ production, *Inhuman* (from *Fringe*'s JH Wyman) and *Delirium*; and ABC has plumped for soap opera with classic literary horrors *Gothica*, the based-on-a-fairground-ride *Big Thunder* and CBS wants to put a chip in Josh Holloway's brain in *Intelligence*.



SHOWRUNNING

► In what could be a very embarrassing record, NBC's Jekyll and Hyde medical drama *Do No Harm* (above) has been cancelled after just two episodes. Meanwhile, over here in Blighty, it's farewell to *Being Human*, whose now-airing fifth series will be its last. *Continued on p.23.*

DON'T QUOTE ME



"I've never come across anyone who likes *Star Trek* but hates *Star Wars*. That's clearly a sign of some kind of illness. I hope JJ does more films with 'Star' before them as the first word"

Simon Pegg (a man with a foot in both camps) gives his take on JJ's new gig.



THE WALKING DEAD

Staying Alive

New *Survival Instinct* game puts the focus on not dying

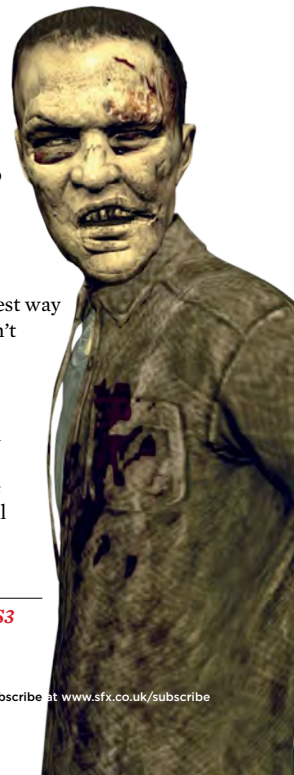
FIRST THINGS FIRST – THE WALKING

Dead: Survival Instinct has nothing to do with Telltale Games' episodic zombie saga from last year. And despite being a first-person shooter from *Call Of Duty* publishers Activision, neither is it about wading in like a zombie-pasting Rambo, as principal effects artist Glen Gamble is keen to point out. "This is a first person survival game," he explains. "It's a prequel to the TV show – you take the role of Daryl and you're trying to find the safe zone in Atlanta."

Bagging the licence of the smash-hit TV series means this videogame tie-in offers authenticity in spades – well, as much authenticity as a game about a zombie-infested post-apocalyptic America allows. "We take a lot of cues from the TV show," Gamble continues, "the sounds, the music, the colour tones." And the pant-ruining creepiness of the undead hordes, presumably – hordes that you'd be wise to stay away from.

"If you remember in season two where Rick almost gets killed by three walkers, that's kind of where our benchmark is – three walkers is a threat. You have to be good to take out three. The record in our office is seven." So how on earth do you survive if the walkers are so tough? "You have to think outside the box, you have to get creative – sometimes running through and shoving one out of the way is the best way to go to reach safer ground. We don't want you to feel safe in our game."

Don't worry, Glen: with scores of living corpses crawling all over the place, safe is the last thing we'll be feeling – even if we're armed to the teeth. "This is a tense game," he says. "If you play it like a traditional action game, you'll get massacred real quick." **SFX**



Survival Instinct is released for PS3 and Xbox 360 on Friday 22 March.



Tracy Spiridakos

Surviving in a world without technology
as *Revolution's* Charlie Matheson

► GROWING UP

"Charlie starts as an innocent, wide-eyed character who's a little naive, and she grows into a warrior. Throughout that process I've really gotten to know her. I love that she's flawed, she makes mistakes. With the other characters you get to watch their growth come through flashbacks, but with Charlie you get to watch her develop and grow right in front of you."

► FIGHTING TALK

"I don't sword fight because I have a crossbow, but Billy [Burke, who plays Charlie's uncle Miles] does a lot of the sword fighting. The action part of it is really fun. We have an amazing stunt co-ordinator who puts these really great sequences together for us but we're scheduled so full-on that we don't have a lot of time to rehearse. You're kind of handed a weapon and told you will learn it in an hour."

► SOME LIKE IT HOT

"The show's all on location, running around all over the place trying to escape from this, escape from that. It's wonderful because it's so nice around Wilmington [North Carolina]. It's so hot that you're outside no matter what hour, it's great. And a leather jacket in 60,000% humidity is always really fun!"

► ROUGHING IT

"For me no make-up and dishevelled is, you know, Friday. So I absolutely love it. It's nice to get dolled up for sure, but for work every day we just get to figure out for more ways to make me look grubbier. I'm a huge tomboy and I always joke that I'm chaos in body form."

► POWER OUT

"If we didn't have electricity I'd miss certain things obviously. For me, the hardest thing would be being away from my family. But I'm part Athenian, I come from people who thought 300 against 10,000 was a good idea, so I think I'd be in there, ready to survive."

Revolution comes to Sky1 in late March.





► **SCI-FACT** *Da Vinci's Demons'* purpose-built soundstages are built in an old Ford factory in Swansea.

FREEZE FRAME

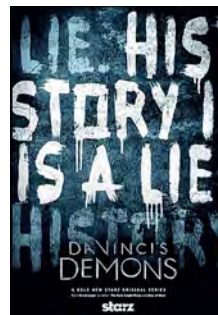
This month: we travel to olde Italy for **Da Vinci's Demons**

IN A BREAK FROM THE NORM (AND nothing at all to do with the distinct lack of half-decent movie trailers this month) Freeze Frame is tackling a teaser from the small screen, namely a preview of David S Goyer's young Leonardo series *Da Vinci's Demons*.

The show is being co-produced by Starz and BBC Worldwide in their second collaboration after *Torchwood: Miracle Day*, but don't let that put you off because *Da Vinci's Demons* has some serious pedigree behind it – alongside the show's creator (and *Dark Knight* co-writer)

Goyer, *Ultraviolet* creator Joe Ahearne and new *Walking Dead* showrunner Scott Gimple have both contributed to *Da Vinci's* initial eight-episode run.

The historical fantasy covers the “missing years” in Da Vinci's history from the age of 25, where he puts technological development on the fast-track and becomes embroiled in the mystery of a cult known as the Sons of Mithras. As this is a Starz show, expect copious lashings of sex, violence and fruity language when it airs on Fox in the UK this April. **SFX**



THE BUZZ

DAVE B



An odd mix of *Game Of Thrones*-style sex and intrigue, and ludicrous Paul WS Anderson gadgets and scrapping. Looks like fun and boasts great actors. Do I detect an anti-religion theme? I'm intrigued... but getting the tone right will be 90% of its battle.

RICH



I'm really looking forward to this. I love the premise (Da Vinci was a genius and one of history's most intriguing figures), while the show certainly looks spectacular. It also looks like it'll have a welcome sense of fun to complement the action – something Goyer's *Batman* movies sometimes forgot.

NICK



Intriguing puree of Dan Brown and *Game Of Thrones* but isn't Leonardo's genius enough? Does he really need the action hero makeover? Will we see him painting the Mona Lisa barechested while simultaneously fencing with Turkish assassins? What's next? A badass Galileo? Isaac Newton kicking gravity in the face?

JORDAN



Very high expectations for this. Goyer can be hit and miss, but when he hits he's *Dark City*-good. Some of those sweeping shots of 15th century Florence have a pleasing *Assassin's Creed* feel too.

DAVE G



“Everything I've never imagined”, eh? Well, I never imagined that CBBC's *Leonardo* would have nudity and bloody corpses, for sure...



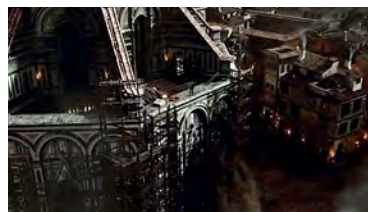
► Tom Riley stars as Leonardo, here flanked by his young assistant Nico (Eros Vlahos).



► Hang on, Da Vinci invented the UFO? Oh no, it's a tank.



► The gang gathers in Da Vinci's workshop.



► An impressive view of Florence, despite being shot in a studio in Swansea.



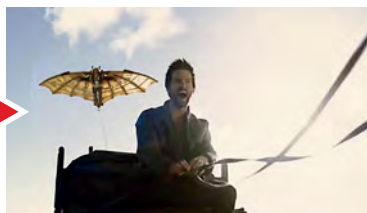
► Blake Ritson plays the charismatic Count Riario, Da Vinci's biggest threat...



► ...who works for the highest authority in Rome, Pope Sixtus (James Faulkner).



► *Sherlock*'s Lara Pulver plays Clarice Orsini.



► Don't worry, this isn't the CBBC's *Leonardo*, it's just playtime!



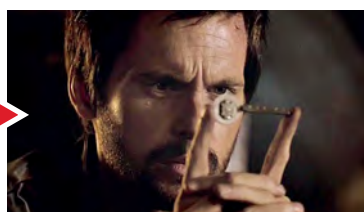
► *DS9*'s Alexander Siddig plays Da Vinci's mentor.



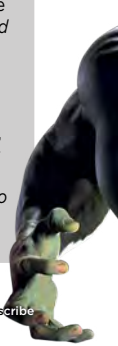
► Da Vinci builds an impressive cannon for Giuliano Medici.



► Superman makes a surprise entrance.



► A key, but what could it unlock?



GUILLERMO DEL TORO

Just Guillermo

Update on del Toro's TV projects



Directing *Pacific Rim*, and probably dreaming of some time off.

IF THERE'S ONE WORD TO SUM UP

Guillermo del Toro, it's busy. The creator/producer/director/genie legend is finishing up *Pacific Rim* for release, developing scripts for DreamWorks and he's got his foot firmly in the television world with two high-profile series in active development.

Providing Red Alert with an exclusive update, del Toro tells us first and foremost that fans should understand a lot of the projects he's attached to are likely not to happen. "I know for a fact that I am busy as fuck," he laughs, "but I know for a fact that the trades and the bloggers report more projects than I am really involved in. Half of the projects that get announced are just pieces of news; they never come to anything. For example, I haven't heard from ABC or Marvel on *The Hulk* [television series] in eight months. I don't know what that means. Does it mean I'm not interested any more? Of course I'm interested but it's not up to me. It's complicated. If you have two or three things going, one will happen."

He does confirm that *The Strain*, based on the trilogy he wrote with Chuck Hogan, is greenlit to go to pilot stage with the US FX network.

Del Toro hopes to get cracking later this year. "I'll shoot the pilot, I'll prep the series, I'll do the [show] bible." The series will focus on how a vampiric virus becomes a pandemic and humanity works to stop it from wiping out everyone. Once the pilot is ready – del Toro estimates 2014 – he says he'll try to stay hands on with the series.

"If I can, I will, but in the meantime [former *Lost* co-showrunner]

Carlton Cuse is running the series and he knows what he's doing.

He's amazing!" **SFX**



ARTHUR C CLARKE AWARD

Fully Booked

Arthur C Clarke Award director Tom Hunter explains why SF literature is going strong

EVERY YEAR THE JUDGING PANEL

for the Arthur C Clarke Award find themselves facing three main challenges, and one is getting harder every year.

First there's deciding what exactly science fiction is, amidst a landscape of proliferating sub-genres and blurring literary boundaries.

Next, discussion moves to the equally challenging "what is good science fiction?" Ours is a genre with a foot in the gutter and an eye for the stars, and asking "do I like this book?" is not the same as asking "what is the book trying to do and does it work?"

There's also the small matter of reading all the books, and this is where the challenge really starts.

A few years ago the Clarke Award was receiving approximately 40 titles a year. This is growing fast – this year we leaped from a previous record high of 60 titles to over 80 titles submitted for the year 2012.

With apologies and gratitude to our judges for the ever-multiplying stacks of books to be read, this can only be a good thing for science fiction as a whole. More imprints and small presses are publishing more science fiction than ever, but why is it happening?

The answer to that lies in the first challenge of deciding what contemporary SF literature actually is, and one of the best definitions of the evolution of science fiction I've ever heard goes something like this: imagine science fiction as a generation

Previous winners
China Miéville and
Jane Rogers.



starship travelling across the universe seeking out new planets to colonise.

For years the crew may change, but the mothership remains fundamentally the same. Then success! A habitable world is discovered and everyone sets out to explore.

Soon people are touching down all over different parts of the planet, and dismantling their old spaceship to use as raw materials for their new homes.

The old culture splits into exciting new forms, old technologies find new uses, and variations on the original science fiction template are everywhere.

This is the world of science fiction today, and now we're realising that maybe this planet wasn't originally deserted after all.

The good news is the native population is friendly, they have literature of their own, and they're happy to trade.

The increase in submissions from mainstream publishing imprints, our friendly aliens, is a welcome one and one that I believe Sir Arthur would have been very pleased to see. **SFX**

The Arthur C Clarke Award will be presented at the Royal Society in London on Wednesday 1 May. The shortlist will be revealed on www.sfx.co.uk on Thursday 4 April. @ClarkeAward



INCURSION

Starz Wars

First news on Steven S DeKnight's interplanetary war show

AFTER THREE SEASONS

re inventing the semi-fictional exploits of the Roman slave Spartacus for TV with *Blood And Sand* and its successors, former *Buffy* and *Angel* writer Steven S DeKnight is heading back to the genre world for his next series, *Incursion*.

In development with cable channel Starz, DeKnight says that *Incursion* is "literally light years away from *Spartacus*. It's set in the future. It's a sci-fi military show about a war on another planet, so it's very, very different."

The gritty premise follows a platoon of soldiers whose mission it is to seek out and destroy deadly alien forces on various exotic planets. "With the new show I'm looking to do the reverse [to *Spartacus*'s feel]," he continues, "where everything is much more real. The violence is will be graphic, but it will be very real. And I want to explore what happens to a person during war, how a person changes."

But don't get worried that the show might be too cerebral. "With *Spartacus*, [executive producer] Rob Tapert and I always approached it that our job number one was to entertain the audience. I think too often in this television landscape, especially once you get to premium cable, sometimes you can lose sight of the fact that there is an audience. You're not just making the show for yourself. And, you know, it's not a sin to actually have people enjoy what they're watching." **SFX**

Incursion's pilot is likely to shoot in 2013.

Mike Mignola worked as an illustrator on *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. He also did some concept art for Pixar's *Brave*.



SLEDGEHAMMER 44

Hammer To Fall

Mike Mignola's answer to Iron Man goes to war

MIKE MIGNOLA EXPLORES A

hitherto unvisited corner of the Hellboy universe this spring with the World War Two miniseries *Sledgehammer 44*, a team-up with John Arcudi and artist Jason Latour. The comic introduces the next generation of the VES armour that first appeared in *Lobster Johnson: The Iron Prometheus*. "Even though we trashed the suit and killed off the guy inside, I always felt that I wanted to do a second-generation suit," says Mignola. The project was originally conceived for the artist John Severin, who passed away in 2012.

"We had no characters that exist in World War Two," says Mignola. "Lobster Johnson is killed off before WW2 and all the Hellboy and BPRD stuff starts up afterwards. We really wanted to give Severin something with GIs, not a superhero kind of thing. I said, 'Well I've got this Sledgehammer thing that could take place during World War Two', so it really started as a project for John Severin that would focus on GIs doing a rescue mission. There's a supernatural element but at the heart it's a throwback WW2 story."

The design of the new suit, which Mignola describes as "really silly - this Iron Man-type armour that wears a leather jacket", is a deliberate nod to adventure serials like 1949's *King Of The Rocket Men*. "In that they had a belt with a big dial on it, which is what Sledgehammer has. I'm not sure what that dial does but I wanted a nod to that level of technology," Mignola explains. "Almost everything we do starts out as a joke. John Arcudi and I started talking about the idea of our main character spending a lot

of time in a wheelbarrow being carted around behind enemy lines. Stuff that looks deadly serious isn't terribly appealing to me.

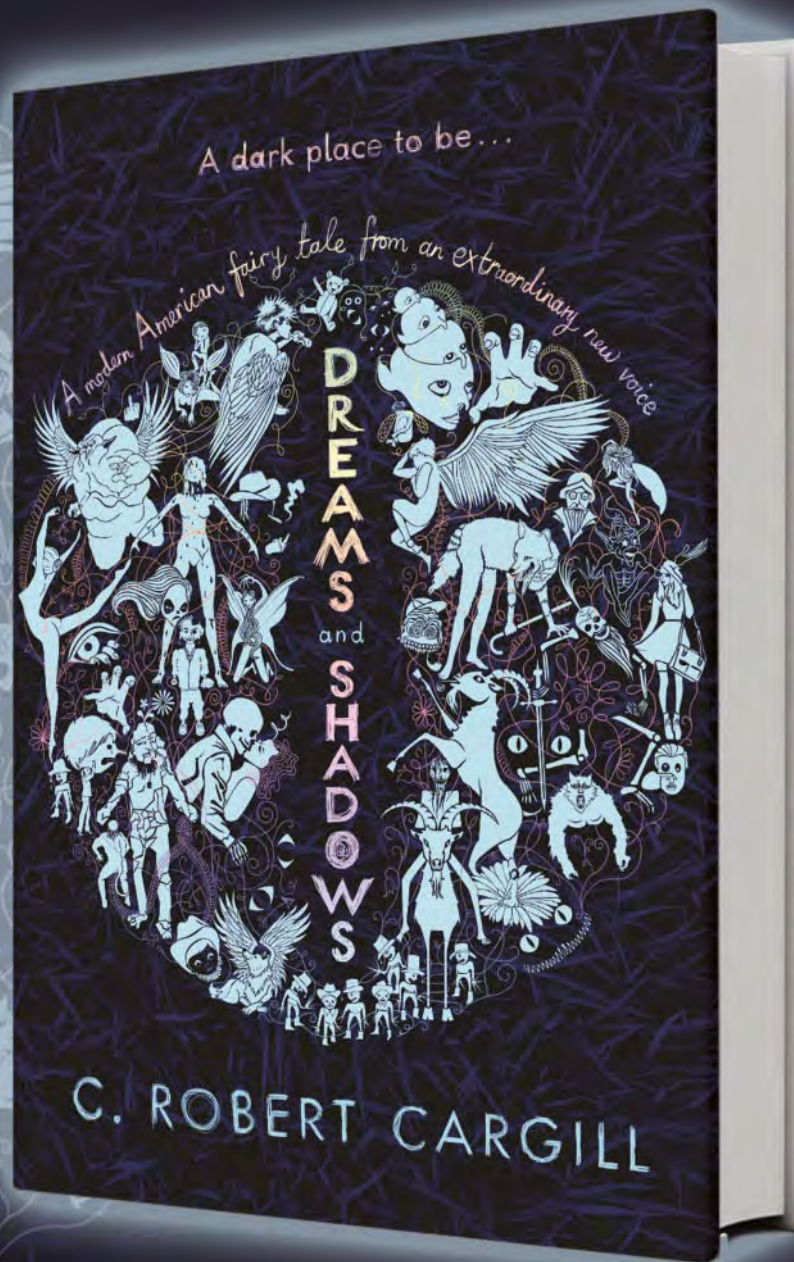
"I love the idea of this VES suit," he continues. "*Sledgehammer 44* is only two issues so John and I are already talking about another three-issue series so ultimately we can get a *Sledgehammer* trade paperback and what happens to the character after those three issues, who knows?" **SFX**

Sledgehammer 44 #1 is published by Dark Horse on Wednesday 13 March.



Expect some crazy Nazi technology on show...

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THE HOST

Aliens Among Us

Stephenie Meyer's *other* book series comes to the big screen

EXCLUSIVE
DIRECTOR
INTERVIEW

PSST! HEY, TWIHARDS – FEELING empty inside since your film saga concluded? You might soon find something on screen to satisfy your craving for more of Stephenie Meyer's brand of paranormal teen romance – and end up getting a bit more as well. With *The Host*, director Andrew Niccol (*Gattaca*) adapts the first book in Meyer's follow-up trilogy about a human girl who, in the wake of an alien invasion, is injected with the soul of one of Earth's conquerors.

"Stephenie thought it would be a love story," Niccol tells Red Alert, "but she tackled a kind of greater love, which talks about co-existence and how we can perhaps live in harmony, even with an alien being. Of course there's the love triangle that she used in *Twilight*, but she ended up going further, and we like to think there's a love rectangle. I like the fact that she

tackles these great themes of what it would be like if the alien beings who are normally depicted as the enemy, what if they were better for the planet than we are, and more humane than human beings?"

In the role of the eponymous protagonist Melanie Stryder, Niccol cast Saoirse Ronan (*The Lovely Bones*), who turned 18 during the production. "For me she's one of the strongest actors of any age. We always say, 'So and so's the real deal.' But Saoirse really is.

"One of the toughest roles," adds Niccol, "was Jake Abel as Ian O'Shea. You have to believe that a human can fall in love with an alien [soul] that he physically has no connection with. That takes some real evolved thinking, because we're such physical creatures. So that was for me the smartest thing to explore – can you fall in love with someone's mind and spirit?"

Max Irons plays Jared, in love with the human host who's been taken over by an alien Soul. It's complicated.





Diane Kruger's *Seeker*, in an outfit that is never going to stay clean.

"I hope that people don't expect *Twilight*, because it's more than that"

Like many a Meyer fan before him, Niccol encountered the author's penchant for secrecy.

"Stephenie's like a vault. You can't get too much out of her," he laughs. "There was just one thing that was sort of given to me on a need-to-know basis. At one point, I thought it would be great if Jake's character would play the guitar, because I knew that Jake was a guitarist, and he could seduce this alien being with music. I got a song, - I got Jake a guitar, I got him practising and I went to Stephenie with the song. She said, 'Oh, there's just one thing - music plays a big role in the second book.' So I had to go to Jake and say, 'Give me back the guitar, Jake, we're not doing the music.' Maybe I can do it in the next film.

"What I hope," says Niccol, "is that people don't expect it to be *Twilight*, because it's more than that. And I hope Stephenie's audience will grow along with her and embrace something new the way she has." **SFX**

The Host is released by Entertainment Film Distributors on Friday 29 March.



Now violence never solves anything, okay?

Aerial Assault TV ROUND UP



CASTING COUCH

► The Sky Living/NBC *Dracula* has bolstered its cast to the tune of *Merlin*'s Katie McGrath (Lucy Westenra), *Game Of Thrones*' Nono Anozie (Renfield), *The River's* Thomas Kretschman (Van Helsing) and *Mr Selfridge*'s Oliver Jackson-Cohen (Jonathan Harker).

► *Cloverfield*'s Mike Vogel will take a leading role as Captain Dale "Barbie" Barbara in the CBS adaptation of Stephen King's *Under The Dome*. He'll be joined by *True Blood*'s Aisha Hinds, as lawyer Carolyn Hill.

► *Revolution* (which makes its UK debut on Sky1 this month) is adding 24's Annie Wersching and *The West Wing*'s Timothy Busfield to its cast.

► Emily Bett Rickards (Felicity) will be promoted to series regular in season two of *Arrow*.

► And *Vampire Diaries* spin-off *The Originals* has signed up Daniella Pineda (*Homeland*) to play Sophie and *The Game*'s Charles Michael Davis to play former Klaus protégé Marcel.

DON'T QUOTE ME
"The only way I'll be disappointed is if [JJ Abrams] doesn't direct our third movie. I think if that turns out to be the case we'll have to kidnap him and hold him hostage until he agrees to do a third"

Captain Kirk (Chris Pine) declares war on *Star Wars* (in the nicest possible way).

© REX FEATURES (1), BBC (1)

► **SGT-FACT** Sting was the inspiration for Constantine's original look.

CONSTANTINE

Dear John

Constantine returns to the DCU



HAVING FIRST APPEARED WITH THE

heavyweights of the DC Universe when he made his debut in the pages of Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing* in the '80s, John Constantine has always been in his element when getting one over on the likes of Superman and Batman. Now, having being cordoned off as part of Vertigo's "grown up" stable for a couple of decades, the Scouse mage has been incorporated into the New 52 - initially as part of *Justice League Dark*, and now in solo title *Constantine*.

"Power levels only buy so much coin with John," says Ray Fawkes, who is co-writing *Constantine* with Jeff Lemire, with art by Renato Guedes. "He's more likely to pay heed to someone's ability to comprehend their own abilities."

According to Fawkes, Constantine sees three kinds of superhumans. "Those who are dangerous because they're too dumb to control themselves, those who are dangerous because they're smart enough to apply their power effectively, and those who present little challenge because they're neither. Now that John is back in the DC universe, readers will see how that attitude manifests, so the days of meeting Batman and the JLA are likely to come again."

This shift is not the only change in store, as Constantine relocates across the pond. "He's effectively exiled from London and we'll find out why in the first arc," reveals Fawkes. "But while he maintains a base in Manhattan for the time being, he will travel all around the world." **SFX**

Constantine returns to DC in March.



Director Don Coscarelli (right) with Paul Giamatti.



JOHN DIES AT THE END

A Dog's Life

Adapting that book with the spoilery title

DON COSCARELLI HAD BEEN

trying to adapt David Wong's novelisation of his own popular web-serial since 2007, and a dog that drives cars almost scuppered the movie – and not because he didn't have a driving licence. "I realised that when you make a film you need dog doubles," says the director, himself the proud owner of four hounds. "We used my friend's dog and it got a fever in the middle of production and if we lost the dog, we would have lost the movie. You need two dogs."

The ordeal of adapting Wong's novel had been a long one. There were the budgetary constraints: "We went through the novel and if there was a red pen in the text it was too expensive or we didn't want to do it. There is a lot of great stuff left."

He was helped greatly by the fact that Paul Giamatti agreed to take on the role of a reporter to whom the zany tale of the supernatural is being recounted. And the burgeoning friendship with Giamatti also means there is a chance that the long-mooted sequel to Coscarelli's cult classic *Bubba Ho-Tep* may finally happen. "I need to speak to Bruce [Campbell] and work it out," says the director. "Paul is the greatest actor there is, and such a nice guy. Paul is a giant Bruce Campbell fan, he loves *Evil Dead* and so is thrilled by the idea that he might be in a movie with him." **SFX**

John Dies At The End is released by Revolver on Friday 22 March.

THE DOSSIER

Will *Kick-Ass 2*, well, you know?

WHO'S KICKING ASS THIS TIME?

► Chris "Red Mist" D'Amico (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) has had to wait three years to get his revenge on Kick-Ass and Hit Girl for bazookaing his dad to death. With original director Matthew Vaughn passing on the project (though Vaughn produces), the sequel to the small-budget, big-hit adap of Mark Millar's cult comic now lies in the hands of Jeff Wadlow, director of *Cry_Wolf*.

"This might be the *Empire to Star Wars*," Millar has insisted. "*Kick-Ass* felt like what a real superhero would be like and *Kick-Ass 2* is about what a supervillain would be like."

But while casting and on-set photos – coffins full of guns, anyone? – look to back up Millar's claim that "every horrible scene in the book will be in the film," it looks likely that certain scenes will be altered to stay the right side of the 18 rating.

WHAT ABOUT KICK-ASS AND HIT GIRL?

► While it's all change behind the scenes, out front it all looks familiar. Aaron Taylor-Johnson (Kick-Ass), Chloë Moretz (Hit Girl) and Mintz-Plasse all return to uniform, even if D'Amico has visited the Blue Oyster Bar for a re-styling more becoming to his new nom-de-bastard the Mother Fucker. "My idea was to introduce a supervillain that made Heath Ledger's Joker look like Cesar Romero's," Millar has said.

Our heroes are also dealing with change. Dave is graduating, while Mindy – busted as Hit Girl – has to deal with superhero retirement.

"The tiny death-dealer was a great gag," Millar blogged from the set, "but the fact she's three years older now makes the movie go into a slightly different place, allowing her to be bullied by people in school she's not allowed to kill."



Be (a bit) afraid, crims: Justice Forever is here.



Kick-Ass teams up with Colonel Stars and Stripes and his faithful hound.

Kick-Ass 2

WILL ANYONE ELSE BE SUITING UP?

► *Kick-Ass 2* finds itself on the receiving end of a Lance Armstrong-sized transfusion of new blood. With Mindy's superhero days on ice, Kick-Ass instead joins the Justice Forever supergang, led by mobster-turned-hero Colonel Stars and Stripes. Getting under the good Colonel's fatigues is Jim Carrey, while filling out the rest of the ranks of the JF are *Scrubs'* Donald Faison, Lindy Booth and a returning Clark Duke.

The Mother Fucker's response is to assemble his own band of supervillains, the sub-editor worrying Toxic Mega C**ts. His top hire though is former brutal ex-Spentsnaz/KGB agent Mother Russia - played by Olga Kurkulina as an amalgamation of Brigitte Nielsen and Dolph Lundgren. She's the Mofo's personal bodyguard, who engages in a particularly nasty face off with Hit Girl that, according to Millar is "unlike anything I've seen in cinema before. This was astonishing."

WHO'S INVOLVED

- Jeff Wadlow is writing and directing
- Mathew Vaughn is producing
- Aaron Taylor-Johnson is Dave "Kick-Ass" Lizewski
- Chloë Grace Moretz is Mindy "Hit Girl" Macready
- Christopher Mintz-Plasse is Chris "The Mother Fucker" D'Amico
- Jim Carrey is Sal "Colonel Stars and Stripes" Bertolini
- Clark Duke and Lyndsy Fonseca return as Dave's best mate and girlfriend respectively
- Olga Kurkulina is Mother Russia

WHEN TO EXPECT IT

- Kick-Ass will return to battle crime on Friday 19 July.

©WENN (1)

THE GREEN HORNET

Britt Pop

Mr Reid meets Mr Waid in comics reboot

AFTER MARK WAID BAGGED

countless Best Writer awards last year for his Daredevil series at Marvel, publishers Dynamite Entertainment must be rather chuffed to have landed the writer for its Green Hornet reboot. And it sounds like a story the writer has wanted to tell for a while. "When Dynamite approached me, I remembered a Green Hornet story that had been percolating in the back of my head for about 10 years," Waid tells Red Alert. "It's half *Citizen Kane*, half *Lawrence Of Arabia*, if you will."

When asked to elaborate, Waid reveals that he will introduce us to the character when he has become very arrogant - to the point that he could lose everything. "I'm fascinated by Green Hornet's identity as Charles Foster Kane, as a bombastic newspaper publisher, who sees the task of publishing the newspaper as a civil duty," he says. "But what happens when you start believing your own press? And what does that do to your other identity as the Green Hornet?"

One of the things it will do is create tension between the crimefighter and his sidekick, Kato, who Waid describes as the conscience of the story. And even with all of these elements in play, the idea is to tap into the character's roots and restore something Waid feels has been lost. "*Green Hornet* is not a superhero book, it's a crime book," he says. "He is perceived by the police and bad guys as a super criminal, and that's his tool to get inside the mob, so that as Britt Reid he can use his newspaper to take them down. That's a crime story, and it needs to be treated that way." **SFX**

Mark Waid's *Green Hornet* is published by Dynamite from Wednesday 27 March.



► **SCI-FI FACT** The Green Hornet is the Lone Ranger's great, great nephew.



ADVENTURE ROCKETSHIP!

Blast Off!

SFX writer launches alternative sci-fi magazine

SFX BOOK GURU JONATHAN

Wright is about to launch his own *Adventure Rocketship!*, “a magazine in book form steeped in science fiction and geek culture, with each issue themed around a specific subject”.

The first issue is titled “Let’s All Go To The Science Fiction Disco”, and explores the “intersection between music, SF and the counterculture”. “It seems an under-explored area, although that’s changing,” says Wright.

The first instalment of *Adventure Rocketship!* will feature interviews with Michael Moorcock, China Miéville and the Orb; essays on JG Ballard, Janelle Monáe and Delia Derbyshire; and stories by Liz Williams, Lavie Tidhar and Tim Maughan. Contributors include Jon Courtenay Grimwood, David Quantick, Rob Williams and more.

So what prompted Wright, a journalist by trade, to launch his own title?

“I was very inspired by Tom Hodgkinson’s *The Idler*, which seems to me as much as anything to be about an aesthetic, a way of looking at the world,” he says. “Plus punk was a big influence on me and it taught me you shouldn’t rely on The Man to sell you your kicks – if you want to do it, do it yourself.” **SFX**

Adventure Rocketship! is set to launch in late March. www.tangentbooks.co.uk

▶ **SCI-FACT** *Adventure Rocketship!*’s cover is by Stanley Donwood, who’s designed Radiohead’s album covers since *The Bends*.

Ages 4 and up



STAR WARS: EPISODE VII

Seventh Heaven

FIVE REASONS WHY JJ Abrams is the right choice to direct *Episode VII* in the resurrected *Star Wars* saga

HE LOVES STAR WARS

1 Nobody really thought that *Star Trek* director JJ Abrams would engage his warp drive and set coordinates for a galaxy far, far away. Surely he couldn’t have feet in both *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* camps? And didn’t he near-as-dammit tell the world he didn’t fancy the gig? Abrams has always trained us to expect the unexpected, however...

“JJ is the perfect director to helm this,” said *Star Wars*’ new overseer Kathleen Kennedy. “Beyond having such great instincts as a filmmaker, he has an intuitive understanding of this franchise.” And that’s why we’re so excited. Not only has Abrams described *Star Wars* as “one of my favourite movies of all time”, he grew up with the original trilogy, and gets the series as a fan.

HE'S A GREAT COLLABORATOR

2 Having secured one of the hottest properties in Hollywood, it seems unlikely that Lucasfilm and Disney are going to treat Abrams as some director for hire – they're investing in his storytelling gifts and ability to get the best out of the talent available. The fact that his regular Bad Robot production outfit is on board bodes well.

HE CAN DO BIG

3 While some of the directors rumoured for the *Star Wars* gig had little blockbuster experience, JJ's CV features the big-budget likes of *MI-3*, *Super 8* and, of course, *Star Trek*. Crucially, he knows how to make spaceships look *really* cool – a *Star Wars* dogfight filmed in the style of *Trek*'s awesome prologue would be a joy to watch.

HE'S GOOD WITH MYTHOLOGIES

4 From *Alias* to *Fringe*, the Abrams brand has always been about building big mythologies. There's non-bigger than *Star Wars*, and you'd expect JJ to have an innate understanding of how to take the franchise forwards without destroying the legacy of what's been on screen before. With Disney planning standalone *Star Wars* movies beyond the new trilogy (Han Solo- and Boba Fett-focused films are rumoured), having someone like Abrams on board to set the tone is essential for the future of the franchise.

HE CAN DO NOVELTY CAMERA TRICKS

5 *Star Trek* proved he's highly adept with lens flare, so there's no reason JJ can't widen his arsenal to include *Star Wars*' trademark wipes and dissolves. (Frankly, it wouldn't be *Star Wars* without them.) **SFX**

GORN AGAIN

Of course, Abrams is still very much part of *Star Trek* (he'll produce a third instalment, even if he doesn't direct) so here's a new pic from the upcoming *Trek* videogame – a preview of what (at least some of) the Gorn will look like in the JJ-verse. Simply titled *Star Trek*, the game leads into May's *Star Trek Into Darkness*. You'll be able to see more when it comes to Xbox 360, PS3 and PC on 26 April.



news warp

ALL FACT, NO FILLER

- **Disney** confirms at least a pair of *Star Wars* spin-off movies are planned
- **Lucasfilm** postpones 3D releases of *Attack Of The Clones* and *Revenge Of The Sith* indefinitely
- **Doctor Who** 50th anniversary special to air in 3D
- **Game Of Thrones** author George RR Martin signs development deal with HBO
- **San Diego Comic-Con** 2013 sells out in just 96 minutes
- **Merlin's** Colin Morgan beats Matt Smith and Benedict Cumberbatch to Best Drama Performance prize at National Television Awards
- **Skyfall** wins Bafta for Outstanding British Film
- **Stuart Freeborn**, the make-up artist who designed Yoda, passes away
- Book publisher **Gollancz** wants your reviews and opinions! Check out Gollancz Geeks at <http://bit.ly/sfxgg>
- Richard Matheson working on big-screen reboot of his **The Incredible Shrinking Man**
- **The Walking Dead's** midseason premiere is its most viewed episode ever



DON'T QUOTE ME

"He's probably the most talented director of that ilk, but he's gone too far this time. I think it's time for JJ and I to have another sushi, and let me put him straight about two of the largest franchises, and not employing me in either one of them. I think it's foolhardy"

Captain Kirk (**William Shatner**) declares war on *Star Wars* (we think his tongue is in his cheek).

NEW AUTHOR

Luke Scull



Lead designer with games developer Ossian Studios, Luke has worked on numerous roleplaying titles. Based in Warminster, the 31-year-old has now moved to the printed page with *The Grim Company*, published by Head of Zeus. It's out now.

► What would you write as the book's back cover blurb?

The Age of Ruin may very well be the last age humanity sees before the end, for this is a world that is slowly dying. A world unravelling around the edges. A world in desperate need of heroes. Tragically, what it will actually get is the Grim Company...

► How has designing roleplaying games influenced the writing of your novel?

It sharpened many of the tools that are required to forge an epic fantasy novel, particularly dialogue writing and plotting. There are aspects of designing a computer roleplaying game that are more daunting than writing a book, particularly story logic, as one has to account for player agency changing the way the story unfolds.

► What is your approach to constructing a fantasy world like *The Grey City*?

My world came after my characters as I'd already spent months co-designing an original fantasy world for *The Shadow Sun*, and writing *The Grim Company* was my release from the carefully planned process of game design. That's not to say that I winged it – I knew the basic outline of the world and the themes and concepts that set it apart from the traditional fantasy setting.

► For all the magic and warfare, is *The Grim Company* essentially a story about fellowship and friendship?

They're both huge themes but not just fellowship and friendship, but also relationships in general. *The Grim Company* is unashamedly gritty and features as cast of misfits in a violent fantasy world, but somewhere in that cesspit there are still glimmers of heroism to be found.

► Which three SF/fantasy authors would you like to be compared with in a dream review?

In terms of style, I'd have to say Joe Abercrombie for his brilliant wit and black humour; George RR Martin for his incredible characters and supreme storytelling; and Steven Erikson for the sheer spectacle of his action setpieces.





NICK SETCHFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future

DON'T STEP ON AN ANT! ANT-MAN

Given the multiple newsgasms from *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* it's easy to forget that there's another creepy-crawly crimebuster waiting to scuttle onto the screen. Fear not, fans of microscopically-minded justice: director **Edgar Wright** reassures us that the *Ant-Man* movie hasn't been extinguished by an industrial sprinkling of *Raid*. "People have always assumed... 'Oh, why is it taking so long to make?'" he recently shared with IGN. "Part of it is because I wanted to make two other movies first. To be honest, the later I do it, it feels like I could learn more, especially about special effects. It's a big effects movie, so I'm pleased to go into it having done *Scott Pilgrim* and *The World's End*, because you're

always learning more about that side." Marvel's incredible shrinking man debuts on 6 November 2015 and Wright promises an origin tale told "in a slightly different way – it's part of the Marvel cinematic universe but it also feels like its own piece."

THE DARK REPTILE RISES! GODZILLA

Face it, there's a certain degree of existential bleakness in the notion of a giant, irradiated lizard going stomp-crazy on the neighbourhood. And it certainly sounds as though **Gareth Edwards'** retelling of the Toho Studios A-bomb fable will foreground the sombre side of the reptilian rampager. "It's definitely not lighthearted," says new cast signing **Elizabeth Olsen**, joining

Kick-Ass star **Aaron Johnson** and *Breaking Bad*'s **Bryan Cranston** on the monstrous reboot. New screenwriter **Frank Darabont** shares his vision: "What we're trying to do with the new movie is not have

it be campy. We're kind of taking a cool new look at it, but with a lot of tradition in the first [1954] film. We want this to be a terrifying force of nature." Hear those urban emergency sirens start to wail on 16 May 2014.

SPIDEY GETS THE HORN! AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2

Warning – supervillain pile-up aho! Yes, **Jamie Foxx's** bolt-hurling Electro won't be the only rapsallion menacing the wallcrawler in the sequel. Hollywood Everyman specialist **Paul Giamatti** has signed to play the Rhino, the unstoppably thuggish bad guy introduced in the pages of *The Amazing Spider-Man* 41. Intriguingly, Giamatti's a lifelong fan of the character, a lowlife hood who gains superpowers after a nearly indestructible polymer is grafted to his skin (and no, it doesn't come off and yes, his sex life is a world of pain). "I thought Rhino was the greatest thing when I was a kid," Giamatti said in 2011. With **Dane DeHaan** reportedly lined up as the Green Goblin could Sony be assembling a celluloid take on comic book league of villainy the Sinister Six? Our spider-sense is tingling...

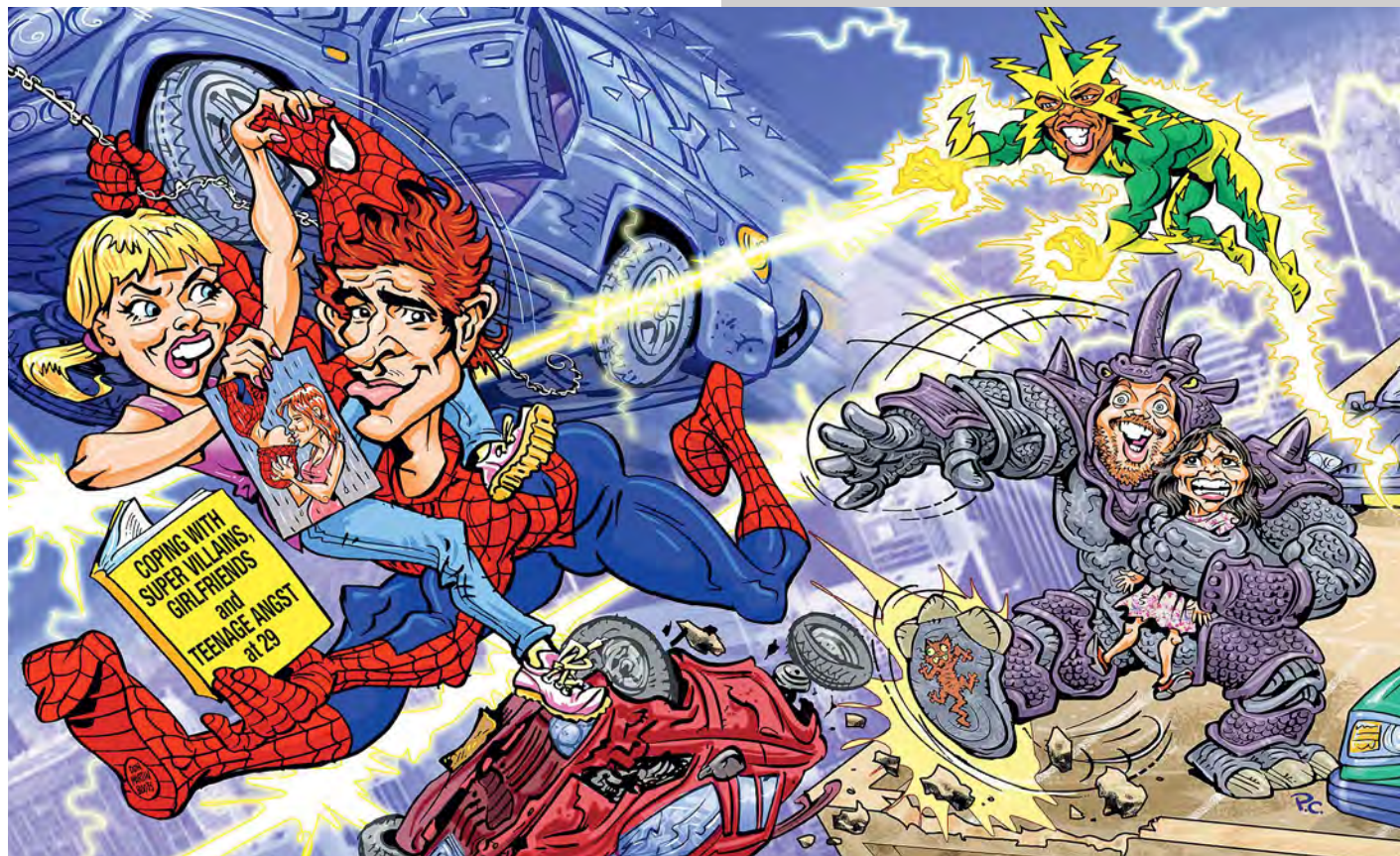


ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CEMMICK

MR SMITH GOES TO HOLLYWOOD! HOW TO CATCH A MONSTER

► **Matt Smith** has just scored the lead in a Hollywood movie – though by the sound of it it'll be a bit of a busman's holiday for the quiff-loaded Time Lord. Pitched as a contemporary fairytale with fantasy noir elements, it's set in "a surreal dreamscape of a vanishing city". So far so not Mike Leigh. *Mad Men* curve-bomb **Christina Hendricks** plays Billy, a single mother of two who finds herself in a dark and macabre fantasy underworld when her young son explores a secret road that leads to an underwater town. Also starring **Eva Mendes** and **Saorise Ronan**, it's the directorial debut of **Ryan Gosling**, with location filming set to begin in Detroit this May.

BEAN COUNTING! JUPITER ASCENDING

► Intell is finally emerging on the ambitious SF epic currently being assembled by the **Wachowski** hydra. The premise apparently finds higher forms of life observing humankind from afar – put those night vision goggles down, space gods! – and focuses on a Russian immigrant who unknowingly possesses the same perfect genetic make-up as the Queen of the Universe (and yes, that's bound to be an awful lot of stamps). *Black Swan*'s **Mila Kunis** will play the girl with the immaculate DNA, uncharitably targeted by Her Maj for assassination, while **Sean Bean** has signed for a roguish turn as a character named Stinger. Warner Bros is targeting a release sometime in 2014.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WHAT? TOMORROWLAND

► Yes, that's the new title for the marginally more cryptic 1952, the hush-hush Disney SF project set to be directed by **Brad Bird** from a concept by **Jeff Jensen** and habitually answer-averse *Lost* and *Prometheus* writer **Damon Lindelof**. And make no mistake, this one's a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma, with a pair of mouse ears on top – wild plot speculation pegs it as everything from an old-school flying saucer invasion flick to a secret resurrection of Buck Rogers to a belated exposé of how the US government once enlisted Uncle Walt to reveal the existence of extra-

terrestrial life to the public (which puts a whole new chilling spin on *The Cat From Outer Space*...). The only hard facts so far are the casting decisions: **George Clooney** is headlining with **Hugh Laurie** in line for villain duty.

GLAD TO BE GAME! WARCRAFT

► The mighty **Duncan Jones** is the man set to corral orcs, dragons, elves, zombies, aliens, werewolves and, oh yes, pandas in the big-screen adap of *World Of Warcraft*, the hours-stealingly popular online roleplaying game. It's a lurch into studio tentpole territory for the Jones boy, best known as helmer of 2009's lo-fi, psychologically-focused *Moon* and 2011's reality-rewriting action thriller *Source Code*. He comes with solid gamer credentials, though, all the better to bring the sprawling *Warcraft* universe to the screen, complete with its eternal battle between the forces of the Horde and the Alliance. Filming begins this autumn from a screenplay by *Blood Diamond*'s **Charles Leavitt**.

MUTANTS REUNITED! X-MEN DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

► **Bryan Singer** increasingly seems to be the human equivalent of Cerebro, ceaselessly scouring the globe for Homo Superior – and then, because it's Hollywood, offering them a paycheque. Latest X-alumni to be recalled for the ever more ambitious *Days Of Future Past* are **Anna Paquin** (Rogue), **Ellen Page** (Kitty Pryde) and **Shawn Ashmore** (Iceman), joining franchise veterans **Hugh Jackman**, **Ian McKellen**, **Patrick Stewart**, **James McAvoy**, **Michael Fassbender**, **Jennifer Lawrence** and **Nicholas Hoult**. Less a movie, more the mutant phone book. Also aboard is *Game Of Thrones* legend **Peter Dinklage**, surely a lock for undersized Alpha Flight hero Puck. Singer's filming the entire caper in 3D and recently revealed that he had a two-hour conversation with **James Cameron** in order to wrap his head around the time-bending logistics of the plot. Break out the 4D glasses...

"Singer had a two-hour conversation with James Cameron in order to wrap his head around the plot"

ALSO BURNING



Emma Stone in the frame for Guillermo del Toro's haunted house chiller *Crimson Peak*... **20th Century Fox** adapting psychic-powered comic book tale *Mind MGMT*... Broken Road and Energy Entertainment bringing **Rob Liefeld's** deity-mashing *Godyssey* to the screen... **Ron Howard** attached to Bad Robot's supernatural drama *All I've Got* and orbiting live-action adap of **Neil Gaiman's** *The Graveyard Book*... *Avatar*'s **Laeta Kalogridis** writing *Terminator 5* with *Dracula 2000*'s **Patrick Lussier**... WWE star **Dylan "Homswoogle" Postl** in the frame for *Leprechaun* reboot... **Nic Mathieu** helming anime adap *Robotech* for Warner Bros... **Eva Green** joining Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City: A Dame To Kill For*... **Kenneth Branagh** in talks to direct live-action reimaging of *Cinderella* for Disney... *Mean Girls* helmer **Mark Waters** signed for *Vampire Academy*: *Blood Sisters*, based on book series by **Richelle Mead**... **Hayley Atwell** rumoured to cameo in flashback scene in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*... **Colin Farrell** starring in supernatural thriller *Solace*... **Chris Pratt** playing Star-Lord in James Gunn's *Guardians Of The Galaxy*... **JJ Abrams** and Bad Robot bringing classic games *Half-Life* and *Portal* to the screen... and many, many more...

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NEXT MONTH!

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Post-Kindle

Has David Langford seen the future of reading?



► SF writer David Langford has had a column in *SFX* since issue one.
 ► David won his first SF award – the Nova for Best British Fanzine – for *Twit-Ddu*, way back in 1977. He has received 28 Hugo Awards throughout his career.
 ► His celebrated SF newsletter can be found at <http://news.ansible.co.uk>.

The one thing we know for sure about state-of-the-art ebook readers is that a few years down the line they'll have the musty antique feel of VHS, Betamax, punched computer cards or wax phonograph cylinders. What comes after the Kindle and Nook?

Cyberpunk fans would love to think that the next big thing must be direct neural interfacing. The Langford Algorithmic Predictometer isn't quite sure what will be the most fashionable location for a skull-mounted USB port; perhaps we'll all have inbuilt Wi-Fi instead. By feeding data straight into the optic nerve and bypassing all that yucky eyeball jelly, ebooks will display with perfect clarity.

Of course there could be snags. Spammers will be keen to use the same neural distribution channels, and future readers careering along the fast lane of a motorway will need efficient pop-up blockers to screen out all those irresistible offers from wealthy yet curiously ungrammatical Nigerians.

Worse, will Amazon's famous trick of remotely deleting our Kindle books extend to internal storage inside the head? I foresee a huge court action when, say, a textbook copyright problem leads to a bunch of graduates' entire university education being wiped by an Amazon glitch, leaving the victims with nothing but colossal student debts and – perhaps for the first time in their lives – a completely open mind.

The possibilities for invasive ads are also exciting. Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth came close in *The Space Merchants*, their 1952 SF satire where advertising agencies dominate the world: "They listened to the safety cranks and stopped us from projecting our messages on aircar windows – but we bounced back. Lab tells me ... that soon we'll be testing a system that projects directly on the retina of the eye." Or directly into the brain!



All this cyberspace stuff is so 1980s, though. How about biological vectors for publishing? In this version of the future, books could be encoded into the vast DNA storage capacity of a bacterium (giving b-books) or a virus (v-books). Swallow the equivalent of one of those education pills found in early SF, and the genetically engineered biomechanism will painlessly install its literary payload into your memory cells. This way, lazy readers can avoid all the slog of actually reading *Moby-Dick*, *Dune*, *The Lord Of The Rings* or *SFX* editorials. Instead, by popping a single pill, you pass effortlessly into a state of *having read them*.

The danger here will lie in the relentless efforts of self-publishers who'll try to increase the buzz about their work by deliberately infecting people

Maybe in 2050 we'll be reading *SFX* on our "scrotties"

with promotional freebies of their awful prose. Already they're a constant background noise in online communities like Facebook. Now imagine such shameless folk entering into an unholy alliance with back-street biolabs. The Langford Predictometer prophesies a norovirus self-publishing vector which can transmit its book payload to new victims, not only by touch but across ten-foot gaps via the mechanism of projectile vomiting. This will be known as Puke-on-Demand publishing.

Or maybe in 2050 we'll be reading *SFX* on our scrotties, the cutting-edge technotoys that haven't yet been invented... What goes around, comes around. There's a 1968 Isaac Asimov story called "The Holmes-Ginsbook Device", set in a world of advanced digital reading technology. The title's two innovators devise a system of printing page images and assembling them into a kind of codex, a physical entity that needs only hands and eyes to read. Of course the inventors are unfairly forgotten when the device bearing their names is shortened by popular usage to "book". Oh, sorry, was that a spoiler? **SFX**

David Langford, inspired by contemplation of toilet paper, has invented a visionary p-book called a "scroll".

Wales

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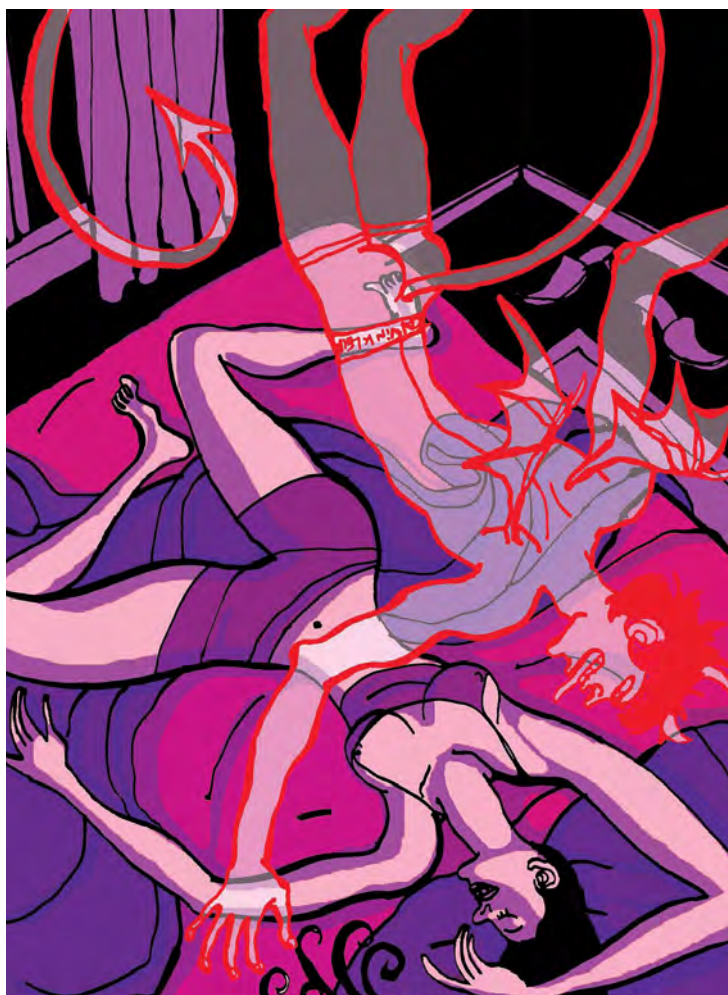
Dream Lover

“Mr Sandman, send me a succubus,” says Bonnie Burton

As someone who suffers from insomnia, it's not surprising I've never encountered a lady succubus or a manly incubus. I've accused a few frenemies who flirted with my soon-to-be ex-boyfriends of being succubi – but then again we've all come in contact with women who seduce with a simple smile and well-timed hair toss. When I was a teenager, succubi were everywhere... mostly in the form of cheerleaders.

However, in the fictional realm, they're based on medieval legends of a supernatural figure that enchants men with sex, often in their dreams. Succubi encounters have parallels with reports of alien abductions: victims describe not being able to move and the sensation of someone sitting on their legs or chest. Modern-day medical science explains the symptoms as sleep paralysis... But let's get back to the sex. There are various supernatural figures that feed off sexual energy, creatures in folklore that visit you in your dreams and initiate sexy times. Vampires have a certain persuasive quality to them although they're really interested in blood; werewolves can claim animal magnetism, but no one wants to have to use the lint brush after every single lycan meet-up. A succubus drains its victims' life force, and *may* decide to feed off you until you no longer have a pulse, but there's minimal mess. More commonly they just turn you into a very groggy love slave. Thanks to their legions of fans, they are also stars of everything from popular anime and manga like *Rosario + Vampire*, the game *Darkstalkers* and most recently in the Canadian TV series *Lost Girl*.

My own fascination with night time visitors started with none other than Freddy Kruger from the horror film *A Nightmare On Elm Street*. Granted, Freddy isn't a classic incubus. The



dude wears a filthy Fedora and one of the ugliest sweaters known to man; he's evil, torments his victims with one bad pun after another, and his skin could really use an intense spa treatment. I imagine he smells like rotten sushi wrapped in cigarette butts. The last person you want offering to hump you while you're trying to catch some Z's is Freddy. However, his creative torture techniques in the dream world made me wonder from an early age about all the havoc such a creature could cause. These days I think: if Freddy can turn his hands into water faucets, imagine what a sexy incubus could do with their hands...

And it could be a great relationship when you think about it. Your dream girl (succubus) or lad (incubus) comes to you as you sleep, you have

protection during sex. It may take place in her dream but a horny honey could end up pregnant. After all, that's the origin story of the most famous wizard of them all – Merlin. But *aside* from the chance of a random, awkward pregnancy, the succubus/incubus relationship sounds like fun. If I knew I could roll around in my subconscious with Benedict Cumberbatch, Noel Fielding and David Beckham all night, maybe I'd try harder to get those eight hours of shuteye we're supposed to strive for! Heck, I might even slip into a coma. **SFX**

The word incubus stems from the Latin incubo, "to lie upon". Never let it be said you don't learn anything from reading SFX.



► Our columnist Bonnie Burton, a San Francisco-based author, has written a number of books including her latest – *The Star Wars Craft Book*.
► Bonnie appears on the massive “Geek & Sundry” and “Stan Lee’s World Of Heroes” YouTube channels.
► More of her writing can be found at Grrl.com.

A succubus may decide to feed off you but there's minimal mess

sex in a dream, maybe drains a little of your energy, then you wake up with a sense of sexual accomplishments without worries of STDs, cheating spouses, petty arguments or relationship woes. You get to lead your own life during the day, and have it off once you reach unconsciousness. Granted, men might have to worry a little about a succubus killing them in their sleep if they get too greedy. And for women there is the small matter that demons and supernatural beings aren't exactly known for using

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THIS MONTH'S LETTERS COMPILED BY

Rich Edwards,
Deputy Editor

► SFX keeps a man sane in post-apocalyptic conditions, plenty more anti-anti-*Big Bang Theory* sentiment, mixed feelings about the end of *Fringe*, shouts for found footage to get lost, and a trip to a caravan and motorhome show. Just a hint of what was lurking in this month's mailpod...

WRITE IN AND WIN!

Wondering what to read after you've absorbed every last word of SFX into your noggin? We have the answer. If you write to the magazine and are chosen as the issue's Star Letter,

you'll receive a mini-library of reading matter from our friends at the Black Library.

This month's Star Letter writer will receive five books and an audio drama: *Deathwatch* by Steve Parker, *Elves* by Graham McNeill,

Gilead's Blood and *Gilead's Curse* by Nik Vincent and Dan Abnett, *Baneblade* by Guy Haley and *Burden Of Duty/Grey Angel* by James Swallow and John French.

THIS IS THE END

Once again another great TV series has been ruined by its finale episode – *Fringe*. The last double was a joke! The story of the last episode was given away in a 20-second conversation in the penultimate one. Didn't these people learn anything after the other f**k up known as the *Lost* series finale? *Fringe*'s finale reused footage from the beginning of the season! Looking back I think there are only two series that have a great finale: *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*.

James Goff, email

► I don't think the *Fringe* finale episodes were among the show's best, but this was still a satisfying ending to the show – what it lacked in compelling storytelling was more than compensated for by getting the character beats spot on. I genuinely believe it'll go down in history as one of the great genre shows.

SOME LIKE IT HOT

I'm sorry about this, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to continue this worrying trend of saying nice things about you...

Last Friday evening (25 January) I had to drive back from Glasgow to my home in Chandlers Ford. Now, anyone who had even half an eye on the weather reports at the time could tell you why this was a bad idea. Sadly, I was not one of those people. Somewhere in the Lake District conditions

got so bad that I ended up spinning off the road and into the end of a crash barrier.

Luckily I was unharmed, and managed to make it to shelter in a nearby service station. The biggest problem I faced was



Marina Sirtis: good with Starship captains and kids.

ROAD TREK

Thanks to the brilliant SFX Twitter feed I found myself (along with my two-year-old daughter, Amber) at my first Caravan & Motorhome Show in Manchester on a chilly January morning.

I never imagined that I'd be within a million light years of one of these shows, but for the fact that Marina Sirtis was opening the show and meeting fans afterwards. At the Caravan Club stand where the opening ceremony was being held, she was surrounded by fans in Starfleet uniform and posing for photographs. Her opening speech included the line "...caravanning is the real final frontier," which reminded me of the scene in *Galaxy Quest* where the crew are opening a shop.

She turned out to be very friendly, and I was glad to have made the effort to be there. Before I could ask for a photo, she said she was going to ask if we wanted a photo too.

John Isles, email

► We're pretty sure this is the first time the Caravan & Motorhome Show has been mentioned in SFX. There's a lesson in this – if the Ideal Home Show lines up a reunion of the original *Star Wars* cast we'll be there. Maybe.

having to wait for seven hours for anyone to be able to make it through the blizzard to rescue me. Happily, I'd not gotten around to reading the latest issue of your magazine, which I'd also managed to rescue from the remains of my automobile, and was able to pass the time by reading that.

So once again thank you for producing a magazine interesting

and densely-filled enough that it was able to pass a lot of that time waiting to be rescued.

The Llama God, The Dark and Now Thankfully Thawed Ford of the Chandlers

► Happy to have helped out, Llama! More importantly, though, glad to hear you're okay after your mishap. Hoth-like conditions are not to be taken lightly! ➔



YOUR SFX CONTENTS

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Your Collection

It's an odd numbered issue so let's see what sci-fi stuff's in your attic



Luke Kaye Swindon, UK

► Main focus of your collection?

I've got 20 *Star Wars* costumes and 15 droids. But I love all costumes. I own a mobile museum with an *Alien* and *Predator* collection, one of Christopher Reeve's Superman costumes and more.

► How long have you been collecting?

I was hooked from my first action figures!

► Your first item?

When I was 17 I became a mobile DJ and I bought a Stormtrooper outfit to make my disco a bit different. It grew from there.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSE WILD

SIGNED X-WING HELMET

1 This is Mark Hamill's X-Wing helmet, the original! And it's signed by him and every single X-Wing pilot. I've got photos of me with Mark Hamill holding it, absolutely amazing. I've met him three times. This helmet's worth a small fortune; it's my pride and joy.

LUKE'S LIGHTSABER

2 Another prized possession: this is the lightsaber from *The Empire Strikes Back*, made by Norman Harrison and signed by him "to Luke Skywalker!"

YODA IN CARBONITE

3 I love quirkiness! I'm going to make a whole range of them including Mickey Mouse – it's just different. I'm fed up of just seeing Stormtroopers at shows. We're making stuff with more thought, monsters and things. Yoda in carbonite is a talking point isn't it?! I've got so much stuff in my warehouse, unusual things as

well as props and models. I own the only full sized Jabba the Hutt set-up in England and the only *fully working* Jabba puppet in the world! We go to events and we raise a lot for charity as well; we take Jabba and other models to shows to raise money.

SKYWALKER JACKET

4 It's by a company called Marc Ecko. A licensed Marc Ecko Luke Skywalker hoodie – they don't sell these in England, they're not allowed to ship them. You have to go to America. This one was a present from my wife when she went to the US. I love it, it's me all over. It's about \$200 probably and when I wear it people ask me about it, but you can't get them here, so it's a special piece to have.

LEIA'S ENDOR HELMET

5 That's actually Carrie Fisher's helmet from Elstree Film Studios: it's

the original, worn in the film. Normally it goes in a glass case. It's such a nice piece. I've made the *Guinness Book Of Records* and also *Ripley's* with some of the things I've picked up over the years.

R2-D2 MODEL

6 I love collecting or making R2-D2 units. I've got ones that are whizzing around, 13 of them. One of them has been valued at £18,000! I love 'em. It takes ages and ages to make ones like this. And when one comes up for sale I can't resist. I just bought a gold one!

Luke runs Skywalker's, a specialist fancy dress, prop hire and events company in Swindon. More at <http://skywalkers.co.uk>.



Do you have a collection of sci-fi memorabilia that you're proud of? Think we should come round and see it? Email sfx@futurenet.com and let us know!

ASK THE SFXPERTS WILL RETURN NEXT ISSUE (ON SALE 3 APRIL)



TRICK OR TWEET

Your thoughts in 140 characters or less

@welshcake66 Since Moffat took over and made it all about the assistants it's gone downhill.

@DoorWay2Fandom #FF @SFXmagazine. I love them in twitter and magazine form! Keep up the excellent work!

@copil I would pretty much subscribe to @SFXmagazine if it was just a cover with an address label. Gorgeous, no?
<http://via.me/-91775mw>

@NielBushnell I think I'm safe to presume I'm the only person on this train with a jar of sundried tomatoes and @SFXmagazine. #survivalist

@sfx_soc Interesting to see 2013 films in @SFXmagazine and the amount that are remakes/adaptations/prequels/sequels. Oh, for some originality!

@JoanneBall92 Starting the week with the news that I've got some work experience with @SFXDaveB at @SFXmagazine. Already excited. #hurryupapril

@andyv04 Can't wait for the trailer for *Kick-Ass 2*.

@RoyRolsten My four-month-old Emily has taken a shine to Zachary Quinto on the cover of my new subscription mag

@FlangeBadger It's a good thing that I'm carved of granite - otherwise I would have been rendered insensible by *Fringe*'s heartbreaking finale.

@DaveJames78 Along with *Chuck*, *Fringe* was the most consistently brilliant sci-fi on tv over the last decade. Stunning ending.

@Surfingsue Just sitting here in my new Vans reading my new @SFXmagazine #HappyGeek

@mjgamson Well the end of *Fringe* was well worth the wait! Never disappointed!

@PaulRBButler Birthday greetings from @SFXmagazine this morning. Now that's customer care.

@rcollins1323 *Fringe* was and will forever be the most brilliant show of this universe and timeline!

@tehkens RE: response to letter in #231, "suddenly" everything's got to be dark? Any sequel to anything for years has traded on "darker".

@bunniboiler Sure I got 17, may have 18 out of 20 of this week's @SFXmagazine Blastermind quiz. My best ever, by a long shot!

@Adele_Pthagonal Turning house upside down to find stray Lego piece and we found my missing issues of @SFXmagazine - hurray!

@IhateShaffer Ha! I've never felt more correct about dropping a show early than I do reading your reviews of *Beauty And The Beast*! Thanks for the laughs!

Share your thoughts with the Twitterati by following us - find us on Twitter as @SFXmagazine and click follow. We'll follow back!

Not like Kirk to be hanging out with a beautiful blonde...



TREK WARS

With both a preview of *Star Trek Into Darkness* and a retrospective on *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* in the March 2013 issue, you missed a golden opportunity to compare and contrast public and critical reaction to the older picture and JJ Abrams' first stab at *Star Trek*. Considering how harshly previous instalments had been judged, the response was unduly favourable - as an example of cinema rehashing an old TV format, it was less thoughtful than the *Charlie's Angels* movies. What has puzzled me is how little reaction there has been to the quick-thrill betrayal of the mythos and staggering inconsistencies in Abrams's film. If Abrams rebooted computers the way he reboots other people's storytelling, you'd find he'd wiped all your back-up disks and deleted a lot of old files on the C-drive labelled "lifeswork".

Bryn Hughes, Wrexham

► Er, have you seen *Star Trek: Nemesis*? JJ gave *Star Trek* movies a much-needed shot in the arm (hypospray, naturally), reinventing a universe that had started to become stale. And in terms of enjoyment, *The Motion Picture* really can't compare - I know what I'd rather watch.

GET LOST

In answer to Ian Berriman's question "Is the found-footage film all played out?", the answer is a very firm yes.

On your recommendation I sat through *V/H/S* where my emotions went from "annoyed", to "even more annoyed", finishing up at "bloody annoyed". I'd have turned it off half way through if I hadn't invested the price of pie and chips on it.

"The response to JJ Abrams's *Star Trek* was unduly favourable"

This is one of the very worst examples of shaky cam I have seen, to the extent that you can't make out what's going on half the time.

But much worse is that I came away with the feeling I do after many of these found-footage movies, and that is *why*? Would people in these situations really continue to hold onto a camera and film stuff

rather than just leg it? Why would you film yourself or others doing monotonous tasks other than to satisfy the story?

Please let's have a return to good old-fashioned horror filmmaking and put found footage in the bin marked "Seemed like a good idea at the time".

Glen Hattersley, Stockport

► Having seen what people put on YouTube from their mobile phones, I reckon a fair few would hang around an evil spectre before their survival instincts kicked in. But I'm totally with you on found footage - when it works (*Cloverfield*, *Chronicle*) it's fantastic, but is there anything new left to try with the format? ➔

YOUR COMICS Self-Made Strips

Archaeologists Of Shadows Vol 1: The Resistance

Lara Fuentes and Patricio Clarey | 114 pages | £0.69 or less on Kindle, iTunes and Google Play. All options listed here: <http://bit.ly/SFXAOScomic>



This stunning slice of bio-mechanical dystopian sci-fi is a must read. Set in a world where every living entity is being transformed into a machine by authorities obeying the word of "god", it's about the two most important people resisting change and their journey to discover the truth behind god's will.

The concept is immediately compelling and deals with some impressively lofty ideas, but the thing that strikes you most about AOS is Clarey's gorgeous, ethereal art style. There's a contrast between the images created using real world models, which look very life-like and the more cartoony, bespoke creations, but in general the artwork and storytelling is of high quality.

Volume 1 and *Volume 2* are available to buy digitally for mere pennies at a whole range of e-tailers now (see the website for a complete list). Each comes in at roughly 115 pages, with about half dedicated to the making of the graphic novels with illustrations and a gallery of sculptures. Still not sold? You can read the first chapter for free at: <http://bit.ly/AOSChapter1>

► Want us to plug your book, film, comic or whatever? Send your details to sfx@futurenet.com or a thing we can hold in our hands to SFX, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. And good luck!



KISS KISS BIG BANG?

A response to Jordan Farley's Soapbox attack on *The Big Bang Theory* in SFX 230:

I had to read your article twice as I was stunned by your vitriolic attack on the very popular *The Big Bang Theory* and wish to defend this humorous show.

Firstly, the programme is about a group of scientists (and an engineer). Having studied and worked in the field of scientific research let me make it clear that individuals that could be described as social misfits DO exist. Are you seriously suggesting that there are no geeks at all that fit this stereotype?

I concede that Leonard et al are extreme examples of science geeks, but the history of sitcoms is riddled with extremes. Would you suggest that Basil Fawlty represents a reasonable depiction of hoteliers?

Obviously this show has had a devastating influence on recent mainstream culture. Look at the demeaning depiction of geek icons from Hollywood in recent years with the release of hideously unsuccessful movies such as Nolan's Batman trilogy and the gruesomely unpopular *Avengers Assemble*.

I would suggest that your ludicrous response speaks more about you than it does about this amusing show.

I recommend that you do as I do when I come across one of your magazine's



Would you class the Second Doctor as a grown-up...?

sycophantic articles on the dreadful *Merlin* and turn over to find something that doesn't offend your fragile geek disposition.

Andy Worsley, Runcorn

I'm happy to report that our experiment to gauge how much SFX readers care about *The Big Bang Theory* has been a resounding success. Results are being collated now. (And in answer to your last point, you have to admit, *TBBT* is on E4 so often it's kind of hard to avoid.)

PAST IMPERFECT

As one of the, admittedly now ever shrinking, group of people who actually saw the very first episode of *Doctor Who* in November 1963, could I ask why you didn't get a real grown-up to write "20 Reasons We Love *Doctor Who* In The '60s", rather than someone who thinks a trivia quiz is a really neat idea?

While TV was in black-and-white, the world was actually in colour, and for young people it was full of belief that life was getting better.

Apart from a further five decades of *Doctor Who*, there was to be the more imminent arrival of the Beatles, the Stones, the Swinging '60s and much more.

Having passed 60, it is interesting but often quite annoying to see younger generations patronising and distorting – even in fun – my past to validate their own image of either the present, or perhaps their own past in a different and evidently superior decade. Looking from my perspective, if Britain was "a grey and awful place then", what the hell is it now?

So can the following decades of the *Doctor Who* review perhaps give us a broader perspective, rather than just a catalogue of clichés?

Andy Chapman, email

The key word here is "love". We didn't set out to mock the Doctor's first decade – it's more that some of the quirks of the era helped fashion some of our favourite things about the show. The features for the '70s, '80s etc will take a similar approach.

THIS MONTH IN SCI-FI HISTORY

SFX 169
May
2008



5 YEARS
AGO

Featuring previews of all 2008's superhero blockbusters, and the final season of *Battlestar Galactica*.

SFX 104
May
2003



10 YEARS
AGO

In which we go one on one with David Boreanaz, preview the first SFX event and ask is *The Matrix* the next *Star Wars*?

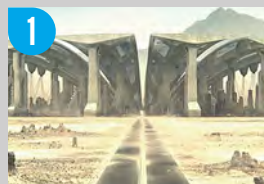
SFX 38
May
1998



15 YEARS
AGO

We announce the 1997 SFX Award winners. Plus, Isn't It About Time You Gave *Crime Traveller* Another Chance? NO!

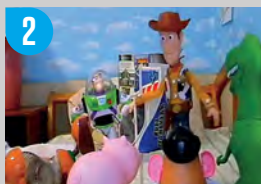
VIDEOLINK The best of YouTube and beyond



Noon

<http://bit.ly/Noon233>

This stunning sci-fi short is a masterclass in world-building and character development. It's set in the future when an earthquake has stopped the world rotating, and crossing borders is a deadly business.



Real Toy Story

<http://bit.ly/ToyStory233>

A live-action remake of *Toy Story* using humans to play Sid and Andy and real toys to stand in for Woody, Buzz et al. The special effects can get a bit rosey, but the three years it took to make were worth it.



Turret Anthem

<http://bit.ly/Turret233>

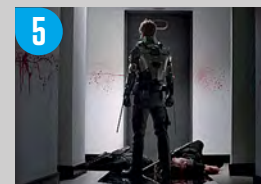
Portal has an ace end credits song that's gone on to inspire many fan-made *Portal*-themed tunes. This is one of the best, using dozens of samples from the game to create a catchy track with gorgeous animation.



Lost RPG

<http://bit.ly/LostRPG233>

This inspired College Humour video re-imagines all six seasons of *Lost* as a 16-bit RPG and manages to distil six years worth of problematic storytelling into five minutes of laugh-out-loud action.



Deus Ex Teaser

<http://bit.ly/DeusEx233>

The makers of a live-action, fan-made adaptation of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* have released a teaser for their short film. It features the hero busting into a facility loudly to save a weepy woman.

SFX

MOVIE MERCHANDISE

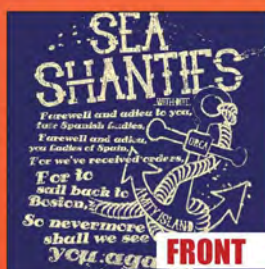
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FRONT



BACK



FRONT



BACK



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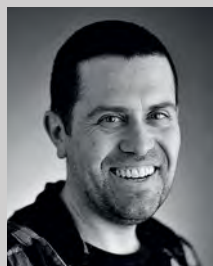
T-SHIRTS
HOODIES
LADY-FIT



SOAPBOX

ANGRY SFX WRITERS SPOUT OFF

Dave Golder doesn't care whether there's any Justice for the League



You know what? I couldn't give a flying superpart if the Justice League film never happens.

The latest news/rumours are that Warners is waiting to see how *Man Of Steel* fares at the BO before making a decision, and that Nolan's Batman will put in a cameo at the end to indicate the start of a Marvel-style shared universe.

I hope both of these are wrong. I mean, I don't want *Man Of Steel* to tank (I have my doubts about it, but I still kinda hope it works) but the thought that its success might make a Justice League film possible fills me with dread. Secondly, Nolan's Batman and the cinematic Superman seem to come from entirely different universes. And while, yes, Nolan is on board as producer of *Man Of Steel* – and the “arthouse” trailers seem to indicate a *Dark Knight*-ish approach to the new celluloid Supes – to me it feels a bit of a square peg/round hole scenario.

In the *Justice League* comics, there's more of a feeling that Batman is the one being toned down to suit the more “cartoonish” nature of his team mates. It seems that the movie versions are doing the opposite, and I'm really not sure that a shared universe that's

all gritty and dark (*Knight*) is the right shared universe for a Justice League film. *The Avengers* worked because it embraced its comic roots. A superhero team movie that's all dour? Nah.

I'd much rather DC stood for “Don't copy”. Just because Marvel had a success with *The Avengers*, DC shouldn't be in an indecent haste to create a Justice League movie. To the vast majority of non-comic-reading cinema-goers it'll just look like a feeble attempt to cash in.

“I'd much rather DC stood for ‘Don't Copy’”

I'd prefer for Warners to get a few more decent films based on individual DC characters under its belt first before planning the big one. Experiment. See what works. And then, instead of copying *Avengers*, try something different, like the big screen equivalent of a comic team-up? A Superman/Wonder Woman film. Or a Green Lantern/Martian Manhunter film.

But a Justice League film? Nah. Not necessary. It just smacks of bandwagon-jumping.



Perhaps the Justice League should stick to comic panels like this one.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

I LOVE your magazine! We just can't get this type of quality science fiction and horror news, reviews, gossip, etc (you know, all the good stuff) published over here in the States.

I'm so thankful for your iPad subscription plan. It was so much more expensive to purchase this blessed piece of imported journalism from my local brick and mortar bookstore every month!

Craig Gunnels, San Antonio, Texas

► **God bless the iPad! Making the starbases of the sci-fi universe that little bit closer together. Find it at <http://goo.gl/mt27w>**

“RUSSELL, YOU ROCK!”

I was heartened to read Russell Lewin's comments in *Inside Skinny* (“I'd rather eat dust than see *The Hobbit*”). Finally, another dissenting voice in the darkness.

When the *SFX* website ran the trailer a few months back, I posted a comment. I suggested that the film seemed a tad pointless. I received approximately 13 rate downs. Something of a personal record there.

Back to Mr Lewin. I spy another cynical marketing ploy here.

How about a range of anti-*Hobbit* T-shirts? As well as Mr L's line about eating dust, how about:

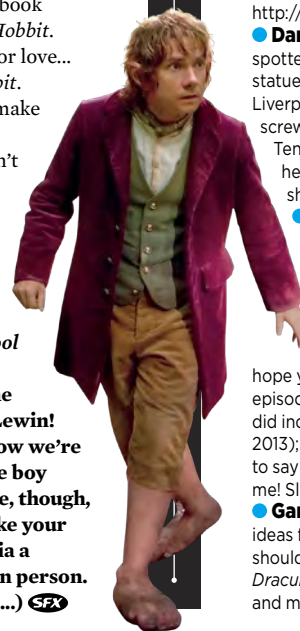
I'd rather open a Facebook account... than see *The Hobbit*.

I would do anything for love... but I won't see *The Hobbit*.

Come on, *SFX*... let's make it so. Once the royalties start pouring in, you won't be so upset about all those righteously angry, indignant messages you're going to get for daring to give the film less than five stars.

David Airey, Liverpool

► **It's nice to know that Russell's mum reads the magazine. Hello, Mrs Lewin! You'll be pleased to know we're looking after your little boy down here. (It's strange, though, that you decided to make your business proposition via a magazine rather than in person. And using a false name...) (SFX)**



WAHF

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

► **Neil Hickman** (“I think I'm starting to prefer Tom and Hal to George and Mitchell in *Being Human*” - I'm with you on that one, Neil!); **Nicole Smith**

(“What did I love about the *Into Darkness* trailer? Everything!”);

► **Liz Louise Smith** (“I feel quite old enough already without the spine of *SFX* telling me it's already April. February and March are not my favourite months of the year, but I don't go around denying their existence”); **Pat Bowen** (“Has anyone else noticed a resemblance between Lance Reddick's character in *Fringe* [Broyles] and the Mekon?”);

► **Alex Walters** (“Thank you JJ Abrams for bringing some quality back to our screens both big and small” - amen to that!); **Mark Nelson** (speculating that the 50th anniversary of *Doctor Who* could surprise us all and feature no returning Doctors - or famous monsters); **Aaron Murray** (there's no plans for a *Supernatural* special at the moment, we're afraid);

► **Joan Earley** (with a link to all 11 Doctors made out of wool: <http://bit.ly/1lanLmQ>);

► **Darren Halliday** (who's spotted that a Queen Victoria statue outside St George's Hall in Liverpool is holding a sonic screwdriver - “it seems the Tenth Doctor did indeed meet her in ‘Tooth And Claw’ and she stole his sonic!”);

► **Mark Roberts** (who “really enjoyed your article on Captain Britain” but “noticed a small error in detailing what happened next for the Captain”);

► **Pete McCurrie** (we hope you saw that the final episodes of *Haven*'s third season did indeed air on Sfy in early 2013); **Mike Garner** (“I have to say View Screen is growing on me! Slowly you're forgiven”); **Gary Watson** (with some ideas for author Kim Newman should he ever write an *Anno Dracula* novel based in WW2; and many, many more.



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH THE SCI-FI WORLD!

Write in and you'll win some books if we feature you in the star letter slot.

Email us at sfx@futurenet.com or you can try Post Apocalypse, *SFX*,

30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW if you're not taken with new technology.

Blastermind

With our new *A-Z Of Movies* special out now, our thoughts turn to top director Steven Spielberg...

- 15** True or false: *SFX* has never done a Spielberg Special Edition magazine?
- 16** How many directors' commentaries has Spielberg recorded?
- 17** What was the name of the TV movie Spielberg made directly after *Duel*?
- 18** Which superstar actor filmed a cameo for *ET* that ended up on the cutting room floor?
- 19** Which of his own PG-rated films was Spielberg referring to when he said, "There are moments in ----- that are brutally dark. I just don't think people have stopped to study"?

20 WHAT SPIELBERG FILM IS THIS A JAPANESE POSTER FOR?



1 NAME THIS ACTOR AND HIS CHARACTER FROM *HOOK*.

- 2** Guess how many producer credits Spielberg has (without checking on IMDb!). Award yourself a point if you get within 10.
- 3** What Rod Serling series did Spielberg do some of his first directorial work on?
- 4** How many episodes of *Amazing Stories*, the fantasy show presented by Spielberg, did he direct?
- 5** What do the following films have in common: *Gremlins*, *Vanilla Sky*, *The Blues Brothers* and *Austin Powers In Goldmember*?

7 We know what a Close Encounter of the Third Kind is, that's easy. But what's the definition of a Close Encounter of the Second Kind?

- 8** Which Spielberg film has a character credited as "Unlucky Bastard" due to his encounter with a T-Rex?
- 9** What was the first Spielberg film that saw him shoot scenes in the UK?
- 10** What is the title of the Brian Aldiss short story that *AI: Artificial Intelligence* is based on?
- 11** Which famous critic wrote of Spielberg: "He's become, I think, a very bad director... And I'm a little ashamed for him, because I loved his early work."
- 12** True or false: Spielberg was an executive producer on *SeaQuest DSX*.
- 13** What is, by some way, the highest rated Spielberg film on IMDb?
- 14** What was the first animated film that Spielberg directed?



THIS MONTH'S QUIZMASTER
Russell Lewin,
Production Editor

ANSWERS 1 Bob Hoskins as Smee 2 134 3 Night Gallery 4 Two 5 They all have cameos from Spielberg in them 6 Movie 7 According to the Hynek Classification System, it is a sighting of an unidentified Flying Object in which the object interacts in some way with the environment 8 The Lost World: Jurassic Park 9 Raiders Of The Lost Ark 10 "Supernatural Last All Summer Long" 11 Pauline Kael 12 True 13 Schindler's List 14 The Adventures Of Tintin 15 True 16 Zero 17 Something Evil 18 Harrison Ford 19 Raiders Of The Lost Ark 20 Always

6 WHAT DO THESE THREE ACTORS HAVE IN COMMON?



HOW DID YOU DO?
Match yourself to the movie



0-5
Hook



6-10
Twilight Zone: The Movie segment 2



11-15
Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom



16-19
Duel



20
Jaws

Wishlist

Illustrating what you want to see in new SF movies. This month: we take a trip to the stars for *Guardians Of The Galaxy*

Guardians Of The Galaxy

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

Utter Insanity

1 It's got a talking raccoon with a rocket launcher in it, of course it has to be weird, says **hammad** on the forum. "Just be insane, like really insane. It's a movie with a raccoon and a tree as heroes, don't try to make it gritty and grounded."

The Final Frontier

2 As one of the few space-bound comic series, you don't want to see the film shy away from stellar stuff. "Get our Earthly viewpoint characters into the action and strangeness as soon as possible," says **Craig Oxbrow**. "And Cosmo the Space Dog. Because Rocket Raccoon isn't strange enough."

Get the Raccoon Right

3 If there's one thing *Guardians Of The Galaxy* is going to live or die by, it's Rocket Raccoon, says **igniz13**. "The voice will be important but I hope he doesn't look like a misplaced Muppet. They should keep the current voice of Rocket Raccoon, Greg Ellis."

Thanos

4 There's a good chance he'll take a shot at the Avengers in Joss Whedon's super-sequel, but you'd like to see him square up against Marvel's galactic dream team first: "Have Thanos as the villain, to tie in these characters to the *Avengers* sequel," says **roddersj04**.

Friendship Test

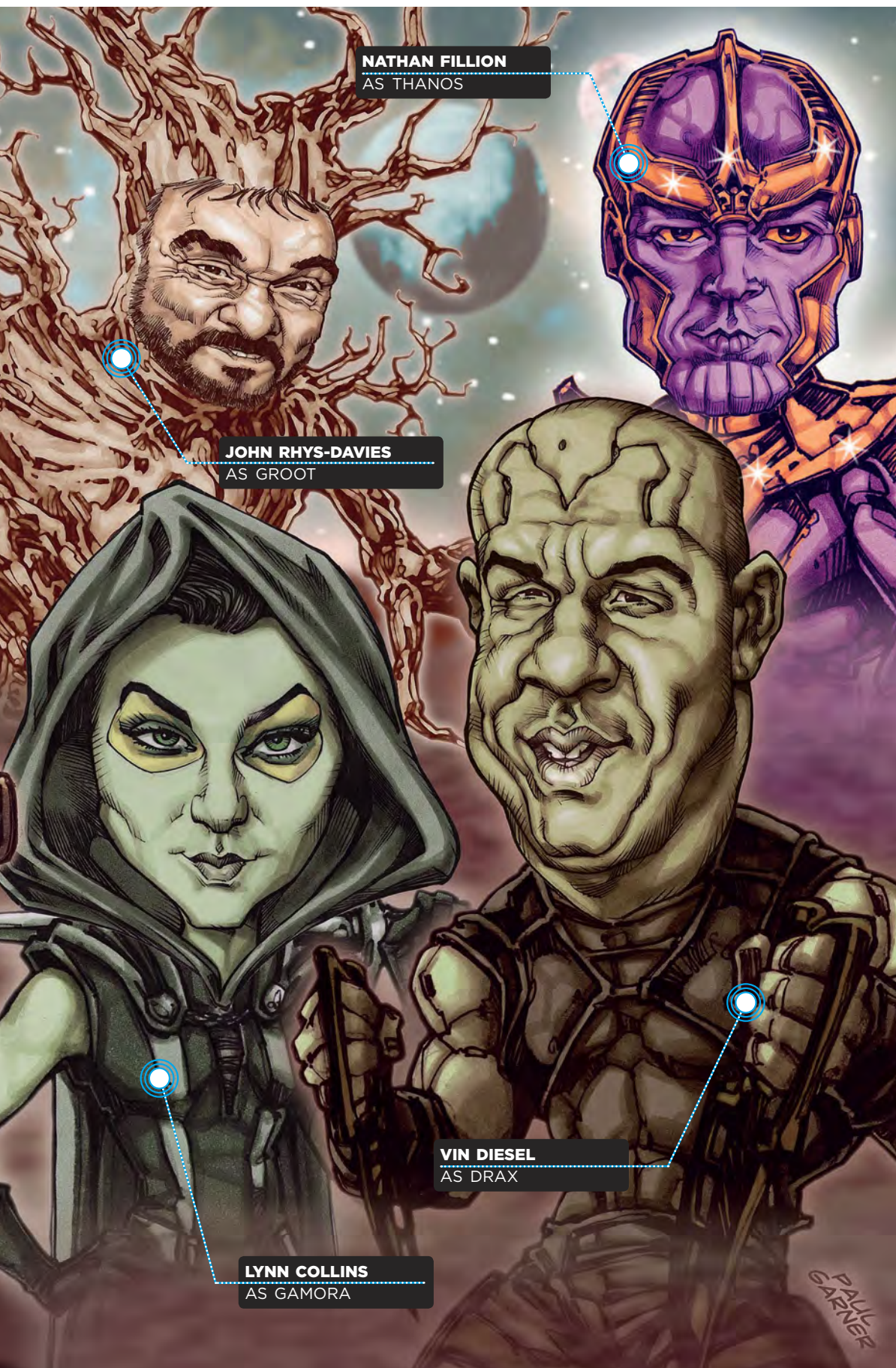
5 Keep the group dynamic from the comics, says **Pie Man 70**: "Have it madcap and fun without being parody, an eclectic mix of characters who don't often get on. What they do isn't pretty and lacks flair but it gets the job done."

CHRIS PRATT
AS STAR-LORD



MICHAEL ROOKER
AS ROCKET RACCOON

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL GARNER



NATHAN FILLION
AS THANOS

JOHN RHYSDAVIES
AS GROOT

VIN DIESEL
AS DRAX

LYNN COLLINS
AS GAMORA

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Make ours Marvel, clever film folk!

- ▶ Cosmo and Knowhere would be great. We need to see a city in a Celestial's head, and frankly who wouldn't love having a psychic Russian dog in a space suit in it? **Lowthor**
- ▶ I want Bug; who knows if the JJ Abrams *Micronauts* film is ever going to be made, so might as well get him in the film of his other title. **glunark**
- ▶ Nathan Fillion. **comicbookguy**
- ▶ Jim Carrey - maybe. Adam Sandler - oh gosh, no. I just hope for something a bit out there and not touching Earth. Keep it far afield. **Knappos**
- ▶ I say John Rhys-Davies to voice the tree. Cos it wouldn't be the first time, would it? And use this to spin off the Nova Corps. **Johnboy40**
- ▶ I don't want the mental image of Adam Sandler doing his stupid manchild roar in a soundbooth somewhere. It'd be this generation's Jar Jar. **Veela Magnet**
- ▶ I want to see a different team, namely the original Guardians led by Vance Astro complete with Captain America's shield. **maverick**
- ▶ Have the characters snipping at each other and at each other's throats, it often happens in the comics and they are all polar opposites of each other. It's really only the fight against Thanos and other big bads that unites them. **Sephy**
- ▶ Let's have some proper pathos with Drax - trying to find his humanity etc (he started off as a human whose family was killed by Thanos - so there's the sympathy angle right there). And go full-on with Thanos - the whole insane god falling in love with Death etc. I'd love to see some reference to Adam Warlock as well - an origin maybe, or set-up for a future movie. **Ballbinder Mann**
- ▶ I'd like to see the CGI template for Rocket Raccoon based on that other classic racoon from my childhood, Bert. **Son of Solo**

coming soon

Thunderbirds and Misfits Series Five

Following the exciting announcement of a new *Thunderbirds* show for the 21st century, we want to know what you'd like to see in it. Plus, keep thinking of *Misfits* ideas.



Send in your ideas about our current Wishlist by visiting bit.ly/SFXwishlist



Event Horizon

Because meeting up is every fan's right



PHOTOS BY HEIDI LEE-SPERRING AND ANDY WEBSTER

CON REPORT

Throne Con

25-27 January 2013, Radisson Blu Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow

Forget the hardship of the Wall, **Will Salmon** travelled to somewhere far worse for this year's Throne Con: Heathrow...

Friday night at Heathrow. It's freezing (winter is most definitely already here), wet and fairly miserable. But not inside the Radisson Blu Edwardian hotel.

Here, the second Throne Con is kicking off and demonstrating two truths about this still-fresh fandom. One, it's very friendly and two, it just loves cosplay.

Throne Con is a small event (roughly 150 attendees and seven guests), but that's a big part of its appeal. There's no hiding the stars here – they mill around, chat and drink with the attendees at will. That's why fans have travelled from as far as Melbourne to be here.

A meet and greet on Friday night got the introductions out of the way, giving gold-ticket holders face time with the guests. Saturday and Sunday

brought talks, Q&As and (smoothly organised) signings. Miltos Yerolemou (Syrio) was a boundless source of energy throughout, celebrating his birthday and demonstrating his clear love of the series. Josef Altin (Pyp) charmed the crowd by admitting that waiting for the new season to start filming was making him "kind of sick – I love it so much". Kristian Nairn (Hodor) battled a lost voice and revealed the full extent of his videogames obsession, while Finn Jones (Loras) and Daniel Portman (Podrick) gamely flirted with everyone.

But the con's biggest attraction was Rory McCann (the Hound). A fascinating, funny man, he talked us through his colourful history (painting bridges, looking after castles, playing Michael "Yarp" Armstrong in *Hot Fuzz*),

his love of *Highlander* and, at one point, played a tiny ukulele.

Saturday's cosplay competition did not disappoint. A group of White Walkers rubbed scabby shoulders with someone dressed as the Hound, members of the Night's Watch, and various Sansas, Joffreys and Aryas. Eventually, the guests singled out a great Jon Snow and Ygritte as the winners.

Then there was the dancing – a lot of it led by Jones and Portman. Which led to my sole complaint of the weekend. After an evening of mostly decent music, someone put on "Star Trekkin". Bloody "Star Trekkin". The campaign for its abolition starts here. Deadly music choice aside, a top weekend. Sign me up for Throne Con III.

<http://bit.ly/ThroneCone233>

UPCOMING

Dates meet diary, diary meet dates...

Sci-Fi London

26 April-6 May
 The UK's annual festival of sci-fi and fantasy filmmaking year, at the BFI Southbank and Stratford Picturehouse.
<http://www.sci-fi-london.com/>

Dimension Jump XVII

3-5 May
 The only official event dedicated to *Red Dwarf*. Craig Charles, Chris Barrie, Danny John-Jules and Robert Llewellyn will all be showing their happy faces at the Birmingham Holiday Inn for a weekend of Dwarfy fun.
<http://www.dimensionjump.info/>

Inva3ion

3-5 May
 This three day TV catch-all convention features fan favourite guests from *Torchwood*, *The Sarah Connor Chronicles* and *Dollhouse*, including Eve Myles, Thomas Dekker and Fran Kranz.
<http://bit.ly/SFXinvasion3>

Paintopia

9-12 May
 Watch people being painted head to toe as sci-fi and superhero characters at this year's face and body painting festival.
<http://www.paintopia.co.uk>

Norcon IV

8 September
 Meet celebrity guests and raise money for charity at the Norwich Sci-fi Club's latest get-together, celebrating 50 years of *Doctor Who*. Expect guests from *Red Dwarf* as well as *Who*.
<http://www.nor-con.co.uk>



DON'T MISS IT!

Star Wars Celebration Europe

26-28 July, Messe Essen, Germany

The world's only official *Star Wars* con comes to Europe for the first time in half a decade

It might seem like a Galaxy Far, Far Away, but for the first official *Star Wars* convention in Europe since 2007 (which was held in London) a trip to Germany is well-worth busting through the Empire's sturdy blockades.

Between 25,000 and 30,000 people are expected to attend the event, the first since it was announced the House of Mouse would be taking charge of Lucasfilm, which should lend the event a unique energy.

Star Wars Celebration will

feature live entertainment, celebrity appearances, interactive events and an exhibitors floor with dealers and exclusive Celebration merchandise. It will showcase milestones and personalities from the more than 35 years of *Star Wars* history as well as a glimpse into the future of the Saga. *Clone Wars* Supervising Director Dave Filoni will be attending, along with author Pablo Hidalgo and Warwick Davis.

For the latest news, keep your eye on <http://www.starwarscelebration.eu>.

DON'T MISS IT!

Magic Number Six

19-24 August 2013, theSpace on the Mile, Edinburgh

See the story behind *The Prisoner* on stage around the UK later this year

You may have caught this one-act stage play by Paul Gosling in Leicester last year, but the successful production is returning for another run on the boards across the country later this year.

It's about the tumultuous relationship between Patrick McGoochan and Lew Grade during the making of classic sci-fi series *The Prisoner* in the '60s. Whether you're a fan of the show or intrigued by behind the scenes machinations of TV from the period this production is well worth a watch.

Attending PortmeiriCon later this month (15-17 March)? Then we've got good news for you, because Crooked Hand Productions will be performing *Magic Number Six* at the event in PortmeiriCon, spiritual home of the show.

There are also dates at Leicester's The Western pub on 13 March (be swift if you want to attend that one obviously) and at theSpace on the Mile during the Edinburgh Fringe. Be seeing you.

<http://www.crookedhandproductions.com>

Competition

BIOSHOCK INFINITE

WIN! A copy of the highly-anticipated sequel and an Xbox to play it on



WITH ITS UNIQUELY CEREBRAL BRAND OF ATMOSPHERIC, action-driven, super-powered sci-fi, *Bioshock* will be remembered as one of the greatest games of the current generation.

The latest in the series, *Bioshock Infinite*, abandons the iconic setting of the first two games, the nightmarish underwater city of Rapture and takes to the skies. The ultra-stylised steampunk city of Columbia to be precise, built by the US government in the 1800s as a floating world's fair, but loaded with weaponry to serve as a proto-Death Star. Unfortunately for the US, Columbia seceded after a period of political strife and hasn't been heard from, until now...

Much more than a simple shooter, the *Bioshock* series builds worlds that the big screen can only dream of, with a dazzling turn-of-the-century Americana art style; and tackles lofty themes such as the relationship between man and machine, propaganda, patriotism and time travel as a scientific idea. If previous form is anything to go by, the story will be something special too.

Bioshock Infinite flies into UK stores on 26 March for PS3, Xbox 360 and PC. To be in with a chance of winning a copy and an Xbox, answer this question on our website (you can find it under the "Competitions" tab) or by texting the correct answer to 87474.

QUESTION: WHO ARE THE LEAD DEVELOPERS OF BIOSHOCK INFINITE?

- A** Arkane Studios (text SFXINFINITE A to 87474)
- B** Irrational Games (text SFXINFINITE B to 87474)
- C** Valve (text SFXINFINITE C to 87474)

Compo opens Wednesday 6 March and closes midnight Tuesday 2 April

Terms And Conditions To enter SFX competitions you can either: (a) text your answer to 87474 at any time (using the codes above) from Wednesday 6 March until midnight Tuesday 2 April 2013; or (b) you can enter online at www.sfx.co.uk until Wednesday 6 March and midnight Tuesday 2 April 2013. Prize is as stated and cannot be transferred or refunded. No cash alternative will be offered. This competition is only open to people aged 18 or over. The winners will be selected at random from all the correct entries received between the relevant dates and winners will be notified within 28 days of the closing date. Winners will be required to give details of a delivery address in the UK to which prizes should be sent. Texts will be charged at 10 pence, plus your normal network tariff. Free entry, as well as full terms and conditions, are available online at www.sfx.co.uk, but please note that we cannot accept postal entries. Unless otherwise stated, SFX competitions are open to all UK residents of 18 years and over, except employees of: (a) the company; (b) any third party appointed by the Company to organise and/or manage the Competition; and (c) the Competition sponsor(s). By entering this competition, you consent to us using your personal details to send you information about products and services of Future which may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive this information, please include the word "NO" at the end of your text message entry.



28 Days Later

It may be Lent, but you don't have to abstain from sci-fi. You'd be mad to miss this lot...

6 MARCH-3 APRIL 2013

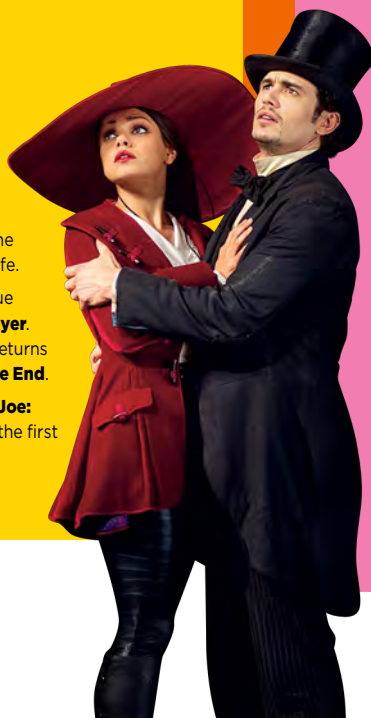
Going Out

- **7 March** - Catch Toby Hadoke's **My Stepson Stole My Sonic Screwdriver** at Reading's South Street Arts Centre today or at Big Blue Box 2 (see below). <http://bit.ly/SFXStepson>
- **9-10 March** - The third annual **BritSciFi** at the National Space Centre will feature guests from *Blake's 7*, *Red Dwarf* and *Space: 1999*. <http://bit.ly/SFXBritSciFi>
- **9 March** - Sheffield *Who* event **Valiant 4** will feature guests Paddy Russell, Gabriel Woolf, Peter Miles and Anneke Wills. <http://bit.ly/SFXValiant4>
- **10 March** - See the classic Third Doctor story "**The Mind Of Evil**" in a newly restored colour print at the BFI, followed by a discussion of the era. <http://bit.ly/SFXEvil>
- **13 March** - **Space Precinct Legacy**, a documentary about the '90s Gerry Anderson show, premieres at the Prince Charles cinema in London. <http://bit.ly/SFXSPrecinct>
- **16 March** - Louise Jameson, Sarah Sutton, Nicholas Pegg and a host of writers, producers, composers and historians will appear at **Big Blue Box 2**, a *Who* con raising money for the charity Compad. <http://bit.ly/SFXBlueBox>
- **29 March-1 April** - Celebrate all aspects of speculative fiction at the 64th Eastercon, aka **EightSquaredCon**, taking place at the Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford. <http://bit.ly/SFXEastercon>



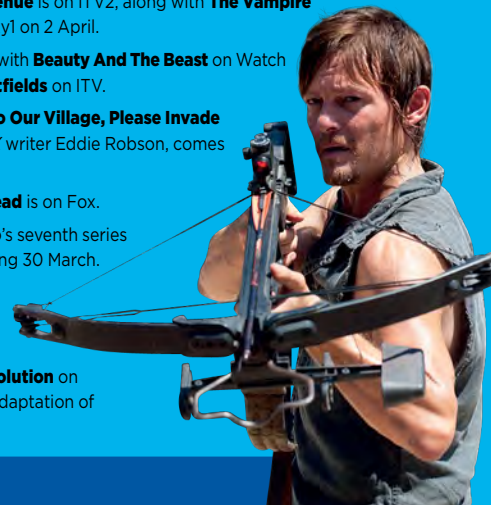
At The Pictures

- **8 March** - See a lowly magician become the Wizard of Oz in Sam Raimi's **Oz The Great And Powerful**, or watch an android help an old man regain his mojo in **Robot & Frank**.
- **15 March** - **The Last Exorcism: Part II** sees the girl from the 2010 horror trying to rebuild her life.
- **22 March** - Nicholas Hoult heads off to rescue a princess in Bryan Singer's **Jack The Giant Slayer**. Meanwhile, *Phantasm* director Don Coscarelli returns with bats-arse horror-comedy **John Dies At The End**.
- **27 March** - *Zombieland*'s writers penned **GI Joe: Retaliation**, so maybe it won't suck as hard as the first film did. Fingers crossed!
- **29 March** - Twihards, form an orderly queue for the adap of Stephenie Meyer's **The Host**.



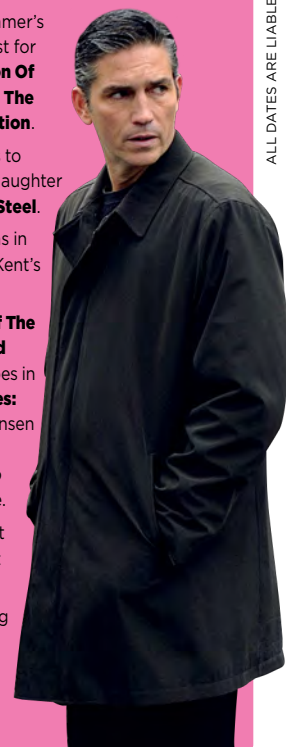
Staying In

- **Mondays** - Catch **Arrow** on Sky1. **Grimm** is back on Watch from 25 March and **Game Of Thrones** returns to Sky Atlantic HD on 1 April (set your alarm for 9pm).
- **Tuesdays** - **666 Park Avenue** is on ITV2, along with **The Vampire Diaries**. **Touch** returns to Sky1 on 2 April.
- **Wednesdays** - Keep up with **Beauty And The Beast** on Watch and follow spooky tale **Lightfields** on ITV.
- **Thursdays** - **Welcome To Our Village, Please Invade Carefully**, a comedy by SFX writer Eddie Robson, comes to Radio 2 from 7 March.
- **Fridays** - **The Walking Dead** is on Fox.
- **Saturdays** - **Doctor Who**'s seventh series resumes on BBC One, starting 30 March.
- **Sundays** - The last ever episode of **Being Human** airs on 10 March. Sob.
- And look out for US hit **Revolution** on Sky1 and Radio 4's all-star adaptation of Neil Gaiman's **Neverwhere**.



Stuff To Buy

- **6 March** - Coffee table book **Fringe: September's Notebook** is packed with concept art and ephemera.
- **7 March** - BBC Books reissue 11 **Doctor Who** novels in natty new covers, and AudioGO release Third Doctor audio **Destiny Of The Doctor: Vengeance Of The Stones**.
- **11 March** - DISCALANCHE! Out today: **Breaking Dawn: Part Two** (Blu-ray and DVD), and a Blu-ray of '80s fantasy **Willow**, plus (on DVD only) *Shining* doc **Room 237**, and a special edition of **Doctor Who: The Aztecs**. Elsewhere, Robin Hobb's final Rain Wild Chronicles book, **Blood Of Dragons**, hits shops.
- **18 March** - A new double-play Blu-ray of Hammer's 1958 **Dracula** features extra footage that was lost for decades. Also out (on both Blu-ray/DVD): **Person Of Interest Season One**, found-footage eco-horror **The Bay**, and videogame bobbins **Silent Hill: Revelation**.
- **21 March** - Jo Walton's **Among Others** comes to paperback, while Mike Carey joins his wife and daughter for the *Arabian Nights*-ish **The City Of Silk And Steel**.
- **22 March** - A special ops team battles demons in Weston Ochse's **Seal Team 666**, while Steven L Kent's **The Clone Republic** kicks off a military SF saga.
- **25 March** - Mythical figures team up in **Rise Of The Guardians** (Blu-ray and DVD), while **Who Framed Roger Rabbit** makes its high-def debut. The heroes in a half-shell return in **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Rise Of The Turtles**, and a young Hayden Christensen features in **Goosebumps Season Two** (both DVD only). Oh, and the music from classic *Doctor Who* tale "**The Caves Of Androzani**" gets a CD release.
- **27 March** - Hardnuts who play an ultra-violent future sport make a bid for freedom in the latest *2000 AD* collection, **Mean Team**.
- **28 March** - Hammer (novel) time! A holidaying couple experience strange goings on in Julie Myerson's **The Quickenings**.
- **3 April** - **SFX 234** goes on sale. Please buy it, we have families to feed - and books to buy.



ALL DATES ARE LIABLE TO CHANGE. IT'S NOT OUR FAULT, YOU KNOW.

The World Of SFX

Because the mag in your hands is just the beginning...



THE A-Z OF SCI-FI MOVIES

The latest SFX Special Edition will knock film fans for six! In a celebration of all that's best about SF and fantasy cinema, we take an offbeat look at all sorts of aspects of it. Expect James Bond, Marvel superheroes, Jim Carrey, sword and sorcery, Walt Disney, evil twins and lots more! (Including Y for Yum, no less.) Your box of free gifts even includes a free UK Picturehouse cinema ticket and *Hansel & Gretel* disc! The A-Z Of Sci-Fi Movies is on sale now until the end of April. www.sfx.co.uk/scifispecial

COMIC HEROES 17

Your exclusive guide to Iron Man, the most high tech of high-flying heroes! On sale now with 12 pages dedicated to Tony Stark's comic origins, this metal-mad magazine also boasts a rundown of the 20 best robots, plus interviews with the world's greatest comic creators - Mark Waid, Kieron Gillen, Mike Mignola, Andy Diggle and more. The issue comes with an official Iron Man badge, your free sampler comic *Sidekick* plus a glorious Judge Dredd postcard! www.comicheroesmagazine.com



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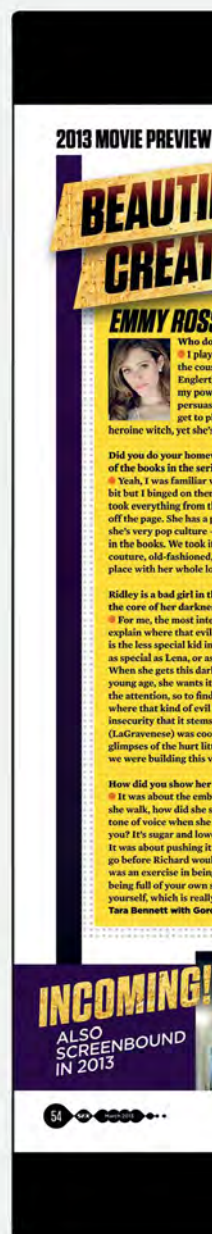
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BEAUTIFUL CREATURES

SUM **STAR!**

you play in the film? Ridley, who is... of Lena (Alice... I am a Caster and... er is the power of... I'm a slave. I... lay a badass, dark... elegant and chic.

work by reading all... with the books a little... in one weekend and... he character I could... copy attitude and... plaid skirts, girls... to this whole other... really sensual, dark... book.

he family. What is at... resting thing is to... comes from. Ridley... the family. She's not... powerful as Lena... power as such a... She craves it, and... an explanation for... can come from, the... from, is fun. Richard... enough to throw in... le girl underneath as... icious goddess.

persuasive powers?... ndiment of how did... trust? What is her... wants to manipulate... er and Southern... as far as I could... id say it's too far. It... over-the-top and... sexuality, and full of... fun.

Jon Holmes

13 FEB

DIRECTOR: Richard LaGravenese

STARS: Emmy Rossum, Alden Ehrenreich, Jeremy Irons, Emma Thompson

THE PITCH: Big screen adaption of best-selling YA novel brings us occult romance in a strange town.

Viola Davis, Alice Englert and Alden Ehrenreich catch up on their reading.

22 FEB

DIRECTORS: Tom Twyker, The Wachowskis

STARS: Tom Hanks, Halle Berry, Hugo Weaving, Hugh Grant

THE PITCH: Centuries-spanning, soul-mapping novel hits the screen in eye-melting style.

Halle Berry and Tom Hanks - and a lovely sunset.

CLOUD ATLAS

Boona Bae finds herself on the right path.

22 FEB

DIRECTOR: Scott Stewart

STARS: Keri Russell, Josh Hamilton, Dakota Goyo, JK Simmons

THE PITCH: Nothing to do with the '80s American TV show but equally UFOlogical.

DARK SKIES

8 MAR

DIRECTOR: Jake Schreier

STARS: Frank Langella, James Marsden, Liv Ullmann, Peter Sarsgaard

THE PITCH: Sundance-winning tale of ageing jewel thief and cybernetic accomplice.

ROBOT & FRANK

22 MAR

DIRECTOR: Richard Curtis

STARS: Rachel McAdams, Bill Nighy, Dommon Gleeson, Lindsay Duncan

THE PITCH: Brit rom-com merchant gives a soft centre to the fourth dimension.

ABOUT TIME

27 MAR

DIRECTOR: Jon M Chu

STARS: Channing Tatum, Bruce Willis, Dwayne Johnson, Adrianne Palicki

THE PITCH: Bruce Willis adds A-list action figure to toybox-hearted sequel.

GI JOE: RETALIATION

29 MAR

DIRECTOR: Andrew Niccol

STARS: Saoirse Ronan, Diane Kruger, William Hurt, Frances Fisher

THE PITCH: Gattaca man adapts Stephenie Meyer's teen-orientated alien invasion tale.

THE HOST

12 APR

DIRECTOR: Joseph Kosinski

STARS: Tom Cruise, Morgan Freeman, Olga Kurylenko, Andrea Riseborough

THE PITCH: Tom 2.0 helmer puts post-apocalyptic spin on boy meets girl story.

OBLIVION

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The year of living DANGEROUSLY

As we prepare for *Doctor Who*'s 50th anniversary, executive producer Caroline Skinner tells Nick Setchfield that they're not playing it safe

PRESSURE? CARO SKINNER laughs in the face of pressure – and then, we imagine, scrawls a comedy moustache on it, just to let it know who's boss.

As executive producer of *Doctor Who* she's responsible for one of the true alpha dogs of British television. And it's on her watch that the show will celebrate its 50th anniversary, an achievement that feels like a genuine cultural milestone in an ever more vaporous TV landscape.

"I just feel very excited," she tells *SFX*, sipping orange juice on a snow-dashed morning in London's Ladbroke Grove. And yes, she seems distinctly unphased by the overwhelming anticipation of it all. "It feels as if I've probably got the best job in television this year."

Expectations may be fixed on November's 3D nostalgia-gasm, but we have an entire eight new episodes to enjoy before then. Launching at Easter, this run of adventures will slam the frock-coated Time Lord into urban-cool 007 territory,

deliver a goose-fleshing ghost story and stage a rematch with an iconic old foe or two. Then, of course, there's the newest question of them all, the question hidden in plain sight...

Who's that girl?

Let's start with Clara. You're really introducing Jenna-Louise Coleman for the third time, which has to be a first...

▶ Jenna has definitely had more episodes one than any other actress on British television! It's a relationship which has gone through so many different epic moments already and here she is again, as Clara, and that's a story which I think is really mysterious and really moving. There'll be lots more surprises to come in these eight episodes. Everyone will be trying to work out what the different versions mean and who she is now, not least the Doctor and not least the audience. There are questions and mysteries and clues and tricks and everyone is going to want to know how Clara is the completely impossible ➔



About to encounter an old enemy on a submarine...

girl of *Doctor Who*, and Steven will certainly deliver on that.

So what does this version of Clara bring to the show, compared to the other variations we've seen?

► Ultimately, answers! You're seeing three different sides of the same character to a certain extent and Clara in the contemporary world, as a very feisty companion, as someone who is very now, brings a new challenge to the Doctor. You very much get a different side to Matt in these episodes because you're starting to see a relationship form afresh over a longer period of time. Bringing in Clara has just thrown everything up in the air again and allowed us to really start the storytelling anew. Even just in the way the two of them look together – he's so tall and slightly fatherly looking and Jenna's so tiny and gorgeous and pretty. I remember the moment when we first saw them audition together. He reached down

“What Steven is writing at the moment will blow people's minds, it's just such a fine piece of writing”

and held her hand and you just looked at the two of them together and thought actually, that is the classic Doctor and companion pose. They just looked absolutely perfect together.

Steven Moffat describes the opening episode as an urban thriller, which feels like a new flavour for the show...

► It's a really exciting one. It's set in the big city and it has a certain element of *Doctor Who* meets James Bond thriller about it. We shot it in London, in a very similar way that we shot New York in “The Angels Take Manhattan”. It has that same sense of skylines and real scope. We had enormous fun shooting down in the South Bank – it feels very contemporary, it feels very now, but at the same time it allows you to see quite how unique the Doctor's character is, because the Doctor in the heart of contemporary London is quite an entertaining thing to behold. He's as funny and as mad and as out of time there as he is anywhere else



ICE, ICE BABY!

Caro Skinner on the return of the Ice Warriors

“In the mix of stories that we were planning for this year it felt as if doing something very bold with a monster that hadn't been seen for a while would be really cool. Mark [Gatiss] is an enormous fan of the Ice Warrior stories and came up with the idea. The sense of a monster of that scale and that size trapped in a really small, contained environment such as a submarine was a really brilliant story to be able to tell. And obviously we've had a huge amount of fun going back to the traditional designs and recreating them, bringing the Ice Warriors back to life again.”



The Neil Cross episode, the 100th new *Who* episode to be filmed!



Helping London swing in the ep we'll see on Easter Saturday.



Victorian gothic chills in the second Mark Gatiss story of the season.

in the universe. Steven's really enjoyed the comedy of that. So yes, it has that urban feel to it, but at the same time the difference between *Doctor Who* and James Bond or Jason Bourne is about as far as you can possibly get. A lot of the humour that people enjoy will come from that clash of genres.

Steven's a huge Bond fan - is he getting some of that out of his system?

► Maybe, maybe. Certainly in terms of the scale of ideas he probably watched *Skyfall* and thought right, how do I top that?

You have an episode called "Journey To The Centre Of The TARDIS". Did that begin as a one-line pitch?

► Yeah, it began as a title for a poster yet to be created in the mind of Steven Moffat! As he started talking about what he wanted to do with that episode you just went yeah, okay, that's going to be a fan favourite... Our designer Michael Pickwoad should probably be credited as special guest star on quite a few of our episodes this year, because some of the sets and the vistas that he's accomplished are just absolutely mindblowing, not least in the detail but in the imagination. And obviously an episode with that title is a designer's dream. He went away and came back with piles worth of sketches that would make any fan explode.

You have Neil Gaiman returning to write a Cyberman episode. Was the impulse there to make the Cybermen scary again?

► I think the Cybermen have always been the scariest of the *Doctor Who* monsters. I watched "The Tomb Of The Cybermen" recently and even though it was made a very long time ago, wow, those designs were amazing. The blankness and not really knowing what's going on behind those masks is just an absolute design triumph. One of the things that Neil was initially really excited about was being given one of the classic *Doctor Who* monsters and being able to bring a new twist and a new way of looking at them. Certainly when we watched them on set they felt very creepy and the redesign of the masks recalls to a certain extent some of the earlier "Moonbase"/"Tomb Of The Cybermen"

designs. What Neil's also done in that episode is actually used the notion of being able to write a story about the Doctor in conflict with the Cybermen in a new way, to really make it a huge episode for Matt. It's a brilliant performance, that one. It's interesting what Neil does - he always delivers such wonderful visual sequences, as he did with "The Doctor's Wife", but one of his real strengths is that he gets right to the heart of the characters as well. In many ways that episode is as much about Matt's Doctor in conflict with one of the most classic and famous *Doctor Who* monsters as it is about what the Cybermen look like.

So obviously it's the 50th anniversary. Big expectations, big responsibilities. How do you embrace that?

► Well, with utter, utter joy, I think. It's the most enormous thrill to be executive producer of *Doctor Who* in this year. I remember when I first started doing the job there was always the idea of the 50th anniversary looming a few years ahead as a big piece of television - in the abstract, really. And I've spent a great proportion of the last 18 months planning various ideas around it, from the programmes that we'll make on the TV to the live events and to the merchandising, and there was something really wonderful about coming back after Christmas this year and just going okay, here we are, and now we're going to do it. And all of those plans seem to be coming together so well. I think and I very much hope that what we're doing is not only going to be pushing the modern show forward in exciting directions - and what Steven is writing at the moment is just such a wonderful script that I think it will blow people's minds, it's just such a fine piece of writing - but also as part of a year that should really celebrate the entire scope of *Doctor Who* and what it's done over the last 50 years. There is a huge amount of pressure on all of us. But the pressure is a good pressure because some of the stories that *Doctor Who* has told over its many years and its many Doctors have been some of the most moving and exciting and unique moments in television, and certainly we want to live up to if not surpass some of those. **SFX**

Doctor Who returns to BBC One on 30 March.

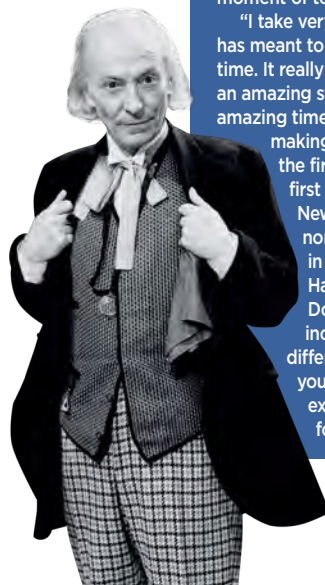
WILLIAM, IT WAS REALLY SOMETHING

What about *Doctor Who*'s other hugely anticipated anniversary special? Here's Caro...

"We're a week into filming *An Adventure In Space And Time*, which is the piece that Mark Gatiss has written for the 50th for BBC Two, which is the Verity Lambert and Bill Hartnell story. It's wonderful to be part of that. David Bradley and Jessica Raine are so perfect for their parts and to be actually filming in the real location with those actors, saying those lines from 1963...

"We were on set for the first day of shooting in Television Centre and Waris Hussein [director of "An Unearthly Child", the very first *Doctor Who* story] came down on set by the monitors with me and Mark for a while. It was amazing - David Bradley was wearing his *Doctor Who* outfit, and you could see that everybody, not least Waris, was feeling very emotional about it. I was sat by the monitor thinking 'This actually is a true moment of television history'.

"I take very seriously what the show has meant to people over that period of time. It really has left a legacy. It's such an amazing story and it was such an amazing time when they were first making *Doctor Who*. You've got the first female producer, the first Asian director, Sydney Newman who was pretty non-conformist and wonderful in his own right and William Hartnell playing the First Doctor. Bringing those incredibly talented but very different personalities together, you would probably never have expected it was going to last for five years, let alone 50."





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Jenna-Louise Coleman

The impossible girl of *Doctor Who* tells Nick Setchfield the things that have driven her onwards in life

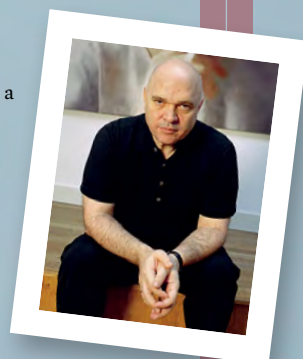
WE'VE SEEN HER AS A DOOMED VICTORIAN governess and a soufflé-crazed, implausibly sexy Dalek. Soon she'll return to our screens as the deeply impossible Clara Oswald, the 21st century girl riding pillion with Matt Smith as *Doctor Who* roars into its 50th anniversary year. A perfect time, then, to discover some other, equally intriguing facets of new series star Jenna-Louise Coleman. When *SFX* catches up with the puckish, Blackpool-born 26-year-old she's savouring a fleeting pause from an "absolutely mental" filming schedule, devouring books and gorging on box-sets for breakfast. "It's kind of nice to have a breather," she confides. "I realised when I finished filming in December I just had a mammoth amount of stuff to catch up on..."

MY GIRL

It's my first memory of going to the cinema. I was totally overwhelmed, because I suddenly wanted to cry... the bit where it gets really sad at the end, where he gets taken by all the bees. I remember that really strongly because that was the first time that had happened to me, where watching something had made me emotional. I remember being sat with my mum and my friend and being totally mortified and trying to cover it up. I must have been five or six.

ANTHONY MINGHELLA

I read his book, *Minghella On Minghella*. It was about the whole collaborative experience, what it is to make a film, how to manage all the different creatives. It was an interesting overview into all of the disciplines. I loved him and I loved his plays as well. When I auditioned for drama school it was his writing that I always used to do my speeches from – *Whale Music* and *Cigarettes And Chocolate*. His writing, especially in his plays, was like a kind of stream of consciousness. How he writes is exactly how I think. He was a big inspiration.



DANCE

Dance was my main passion when I was young. It was totally my life from when I was about four years old to when I was doing my A levels. I was doing semi-professional dance school in the evenings until I got to the point where time-wise I had to make a decision, and my evenings were then spent doing play rehearsals with a theatre company, and the dance got less and less. It was a choice that I made. On *Doctor Who* I've had to do all kinds of things where I'm in vortexes and the camera's moving around you, so it actually comes in really, really handy. And also having an awareness of your body and how it moves. I had to do a bit in the Christmas special where I fell backwards off a cloud. I've done quite a few of my own stunts where you're like falling backwards onto mattresses and things like that. So, yeah, I totally think that I'm a professional stuntperson now!

BALI

I went on holiday on my own a couple of years back. I took myself off to Bali. It had been quite an intense year. Everything had been about acting and the industry and suddenly I was in Eastern Bali with no access to the internet or my phone or anything like that. I found that quite special. I remember meeting a taxi driver there and he was asking me so many questions, he was hilarious – he'd heard the ➔





"I'm addicted to *Breaking Bad*, I play it as I'm getting ready in the mornings"

Walter and Jesse taking a snack break from making crystal meth.

expression piss off and couldn't understand it! He really was interested in our philosophies. He ended up driving me around for three days and we ended up having this amazing dialogue. He was trying to explain what his philosophy on life was and he couldn't quite say it in English so what he came out with was "Making easy" – I always remember that.

BREAKING BAD

I'm being inspired right now by *Breaking Bad*. I'm on season five, which everyone says is the best one, but I literally don't think I've seen a weak episode. It's just such superb acting and such brilliant style. I think it's just phenomenal. I'm a bit addicted to it, actually. I'm playing it as I'm getting ready in the mornings, over breakfast...

JOHN STEINBECK

I love to read. I go through quite a lot of books. One that really stuck with me was *East Of Eden* by John Steinbeck. There's a quote from it that I have framed in my room. It's about having power as a human and as a man, and that whatever happens to you, you can make choices and decisions in how you deal with things that come your way, and that's something that's stuck with me since I read it. I flit a lot with books – it always seems that I've got such a mammoth reading list. I note down all these recommendations of things to read and try to work my way through them, but when we're filming it's such an intense job that everything else tends to go out the window. My most treasured children's book was *The Naughtiest Girl In The School* by Enid Blyton – I must have read that about seven times. Was I the naughtiest girl in the school? No, no, I definitely wasn't – I went through a phase, but I ended up being Head Girl at school, so totally the opposite!

MUMFORD AND SONS

I'm a big Mumford And Sons fan. Bizarrely, I like to jog to them – it makes me feel really happy, with all the drums coming in! When it's Saturday night and I'm going out I might put on a bit of Florence. I kind of flit in and out of phases. At the moment I'm really liking Maverick Sabre. Certain songs like the Jackson 5 remind me of my childhood, dancing around my bedroom. I wasn't one of those girls into boy bands – I wasn't into Take That or 5ive or

anything like that. I went through a Spice Girls phase, but I never had posters of them up on my wall...

MARION COTILLARD

She's just absolutely wonderful and graceful and a true movie star of our age. And it's kind of lovely because I don't really know anything about her at all, so you kind of have that distance. She really does something different every time I see her. Everything is so layered and detailed and truthful.

HEPBURN AND TRACY

When I started on *Doctor Who* Matt said to me "Watch Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy films!" We were talking about our dynamic and trying to figure it out, realising we were a double act. I've got a couple of box sets that I'm getting through, stuff like *Adam's Rib*. It's trying to find each other's rhythm. It's *Doctor Who* – things move quickly. When I joined, Caro the producer said to me, "This show is really like no other, because you don't sit down to have a chat, you don't get to know these characters in that way, you are literally creating a character and creating a relationship as you're running down a corridor..." You're always running away from something or running to something, and it's all about that momentum and that pace. And the minute you let that drop, the minute you become sentimental or indulge it just doesn't work. Too much is happening and it moves too fast.

Matt always said it's about physically finding our rhythm. In the TARDIS, for example, he's always running round and I remember for the first couple of days I didn't know where to put myself because I was in his space – and in his TARDIS! It's a more choreographed show than anything I've ever worked on. In a way the whole thing is like a dance, and the moment we started dancing together and finding that rhythm is when it worked. **SFX**

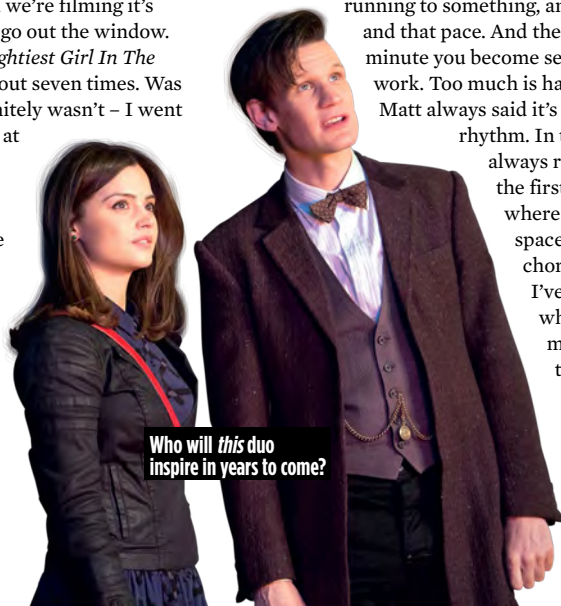
Doctor Who returns to BBC One on Saturday 30 March.



Hepburn and Tracy, one of Hollywood's most unconventional couples.



Mumford And Sons. Sons not pictured.



Who will this duo inspire in years to come?

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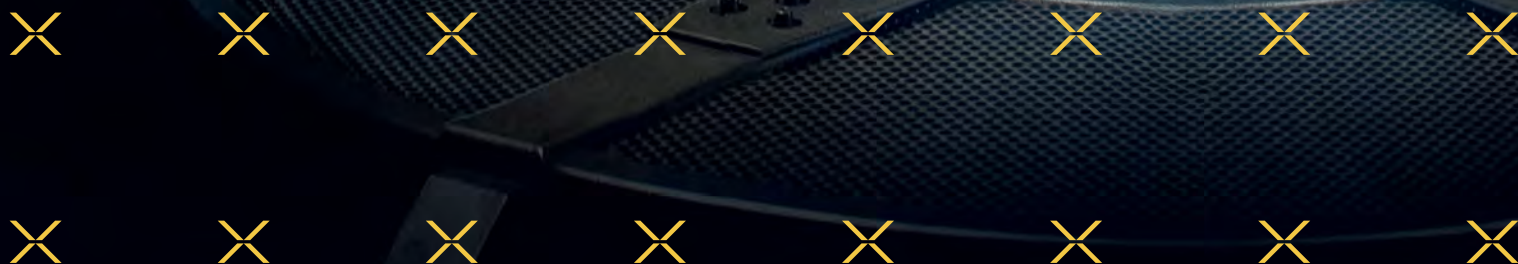
ALSO AVAILABLE





STARK

Metal fatigue? You must be joking – Joseph McCabe discovers how *Iron Man 3* will rock our world





LIFE

A

FTER HEADLINING THREE

blockbuster films, Tony Stark has gone through more weaponised suits than movie appearances. But that doesn't mean the men who make those movies are any less determined than the armoured Avenger. Of course what they're determined to do, to the delight of fans everywhere, is make his life a living hell.

When we first met him, the "genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist" grew a conscience after almost getting killed when his weapons fell into the wrong hands. A couple of years later, his resulting handicap – and some new foes – almost destroyed him. And in *The Avengers*, last year's mother of all superhero team-ups, even with a squadron of equally powerful newfound friends at his side, Stark almost nuked himself defending the Earth against an alien invasion force. What then does fate hold for him when he tempts it a fourth time in *Iron Man 3*?

"It's fun to watch Tony be on his back foot," chuckles Marvel Studios' Kevin Feige, the chief architect of Ol' Shellhead's misery. "He's used to having it all, and kind of had it all through *Iron Man 2* for the most part – except for a few brief moments on the track at Monaco, when his car got cut in half and he was like 'What the fuck is going on?'" I like that part of Tony. I like when we put Tony in that position. That was one of the pillars that we talked to Shane [Black, director] about early on. We said, 'Hey, can you build a movie around this thing? Let's blow his life apart and see if he can get it all back. Like he did in the cave scenes in *Iron Man*.'

"So if there was a lesson to be had in our very initial conversations about *Iron Man 3*, it was two things: one, for our most grounded realistic hero in *Iron Man*, all of the craziness he saw in *Avengers*, how does that affect his head? And two, let's have him face his biggest foe, who blows his life apart, and put him back, metaphorically, in that cave."

IN THE RED CORNER

That foe, the Mandarin, is the arch-enemy most closely identified with the comic book Iron Man, and the one fans have longed to see on the big screen since Tony Stark first flew across it. But how to depict a villain created in the notorious "yellow peril" tradition of Fu Manchu, who's evolved into a super terrorist, at a time when real terrorism is feared by so many?

"There are no politics really to be found in this," says Black – who's joined Feige this sunny Santa Monica afternoon to speak with *SFX* – about *Iron Man 3*'s Mandarin, as played by Sir Ben Kingsley. "There's no political agenda here that could be interpreted in any way other than the most generic terms."

"Part of the genius of the way Shane has interpreted the Mandarin," adds Feige, "is he's actively and within the body of the film using all of those preconceived notions about

THE ARMOURER

Nobody knows Iron Man better than artist Adi Granov. After drawing Warren Ellis's Extremis storyline – an influence on *Iron Man 3* – he was recruited by Marvel to work on all three Shellhead films as well as *The Avengers*. Time to share some trade secrets with Stephen Jewell...

JOB DESCRIPTION

I've had two separate roles on the films. There's designing the look of the characters and on *Iron Man*, I spent most of my time designing Iron Man Mark 2 and 3 and Ironmonger. Then there's doing what we call key frame illustrations to inspire a scene in the film such as when Iron Man is flying with the jets. There was nothing in the script describing that but Jon Favreau and I had a talk and he said it would be really cool to have him have this dogfight with these airplanes. So I drew the scene and it ended up in the film.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE...

The Mark III design in *Iron Man* was the beginning of everything as it was a completely new design. Jon Favreau really liked the overall look of the designs I did in the comics, so he wanted to keep that kind of silhouette, where if you squint it still looks the same.



IT'S IN THE DETAIL

The main difference between the designs in the comics and films is that in comics, everything has to be drawn over and over again, so it has to be simplified. The more complex you make it, the more time it will take. But in the movies, it's better to make it as detailed and as believable as possible because it's either going to be turned into a life-sized prop or a 3D model, so that will give it more presence. What we tried to do is to keep the overall feel of the one I did in the comic but make it seem as functional as possible.



BADASS ROBOTS!

Everybody likes the idea of a really powerful suit of armour. That's always been a popular theme; just look at Japanese manga and anime: so much of it is based on people wearing really powerful suits of armour, so it's something that really resonates with people. Everybody likes badass robots! Iron Man is a guy who builds a really cool, powerful suit of armour and then uses it to fight crime. It's not surprising at all, so if you make it look cool, it's kind of a sure thing!



EVERYBODY LOVES AN UPGRADE!

What's always worked well with Iron Man is that Tony Stark designs the suit himself, so it makes perfect sense that he would constantly upgrade the design and change different things. It also keeps the interest level up. It's like a car manufacturer. Even if the previous model is absolutely fine, people get a bit bored with it so you have to add new features and the technology also moves on. Iron Man is like the perfect character for that because Tony Stark essentially stays the same, it's just the suit that changes. The only challenge is to keep it consistent, to not do anything that would ruin the iconic image of Iron Man. You can push it in many different ways and it still works really well.



A sprinkling of Pepper makes everything better.



Sadly, his online dating video profile was not as popular as he hoped.

terrorism for his own ends. So he calls himself the Mandarin, he's got robes that have some Chinese influences to them. Yet he's also got combat boots and military camo pants, he's got a somewhat Middle Eastern beard, and he talks like a Southern preacher. He's really utilising lots of different iconography."

Black nods in agreement. "He's a theatrical terrorist. He's summing up all the various faces of which he perceives America to be afraid and trying to incorporate them into this lunatic person that he is; this front he presents, as a crazed guy who has gone nutty in the field and hates America. He comes back at us with everything that he perceives we're afraid of."

DANGEROUS LIAISONS

Among those fears is a universal one – the threat to friends and family. In *Iron Man 3*, Tony's concern for his loved ones places them in even greater danger. An early attack against him, for example, injures Happy Hogan (a returning-on-screen-only Jon

THE MINUTE YOU PUT ROBERT AND GWYNETH IN A ROOM WITH NO SCRIPT AND JUST SAY, 'GO,' THEY'RE GONNA BE GREAT

Favreau), and finds an angry, careless Stark putting lady love Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow) in harm's way.

Feige knows that while a hero is defined by his enemies, a great hero is defined by his friends.

"When we did the first film, Jon [Favreau] used to talk about *His Girl Friday* all the time, that dynamic, with regards to Tony and Pepper. The minute you put Robert and Gwyneth in a room with no script

and just say, 'Go,' they're gonna be great. With the words that Shane and his co-writer Drew [Pearce] gave them to say, with their comfort factor with ad libs, it really is a banter unlike any male-female banter in these kinds of genre films. And we don't want her to be just the damsel in distress. We want her to be a motivating factor for a lot of Tony's actions. So she's the CEO of the company. She's a huge presence in his life.

"Happy Hogan is one of his best friends. We've seen

PHASE SHIFT

THE FUTURE OF THE MARVEL MOVIE UNIVERSE

We grill Marvel's movie mastermind Kevin Feige on Phase 2 and beyond...

Phase 2 of Marvel Studios' films has been described as "cosmic." Is that a fair description?

✓ I wouldn't say that in a broad sense. The *Thor* film and the *Guardians Of The Galaxy* film certainly are cosmic. *Guardians* and *Thor* will take the brunt of the cosmic side of the universe, particularly *Guardians*, which is 95 per cent in space. I think *Iron Man 3* shows the other side of Phase 2, which is delving deeper into the characters. Throwing them on a much more personal journey. And *Captain America* will showcase... What's exciting to me about *Cap* – sort of about *Iron Man 3* too if you look at it – is it's tonally almost like a different genre. Shane Black's described *Iron Man 3* as a Tom Clancy sort of political thriller, which I like a lot. We hired our directors on *Cap* because they loved our explanation that we really want to make a '70s political thriller masquerading as a big superhero movie. Just like with the first film – we got Joe Johnston because we said, "We want to do a '40s World War Two movie masquerading as a big superhero movie." I love that we're doing a sequel to a film that's a completely different genre than the first film. I think that's fun. And the comics do it all the time.

Is it too soon to categorise Phase 3? What is more cosmic than cosmic? Magic, as in *Doctor Strange*?

✓ I'm not looking at Phase 1 as grounded and Phase 2 as cosmic and Phase 3 as magic. The films are all so eclectic and different from each other

And who else might be joining them on this picture?



Alan Taylor directs Chris Hemsworth in the ways of thunder on *Thor 2*.

that you can't overarchingly categorise them like that. If and when we enter the magic arena, it will be through *Doctor Strange*. Sure, obviously. And that's to me what's exciting about *Strange*.

Marvel Studios is taking risks in much the same way that Marvel Comics took risks in the '70s, introducing characters as diverse as Captain Marvel, Adam Warlock, the Eternals and Devil Dinosaur. Could things get that crazy in the films?

✓ [Laughs] Look, never say never. We had Thanos sitting on a throne at the end of *Avengers*, we got Malekith in *Thor*, we've got Falcon in *Cap 2*. We always take our cues from the most successful elements of the comics.

Will *Guardians Of The Galaxy* prove as integral to *Avengers 2* as each Avenger's solo film?

✓ I would say that it does not. It's much more of a standalone film. It takes place in the same universe. And when we've been on the other side of that universe in other movies, you



might see those characteristics in *Guardians*, but the Avengers are not involved with what's happening out there at this time.

Joss has said that *Avengers 2* will "go deeper." How do you go deeper after the first *Avengers*?

✓ I don't know exactly what he meant when he said "deeper". But, similar to *Iron Man 3*, we're not saying, "Now it's gotta be even bigger and more aliens come and there's a giant monster!" The most exciting thing to us about the *Iron Man* franchise is Tony Stark and his journey. The most exciting thing to us about the *Avengers* franchise is the interaction amongst those characters. It's putting them in situations that you wouldn't expect to see them in. It's that kind of fun; and the relationships between the characters in the *Avengers*, which I loved. Almost whatever the heck else is happening is gravy in that franchise, because all I care about is Bruce and Tony, Tony and Steve, Widow and Bruce – and how Thor fits into it, because he's always the outsider amongst outsiders. So I think that's where the value lies. And going deeper amongst those characters in those relationships.

In addition to *Ant-Man*, might we see other staple Avengers in *Avengers 2* – like the Vision, Scarlet Witch, Giant-Man/Goliath, or Wonder Man?

I think it's not a secret that Joss and I and all of us at Marvel think that part of the fun of *Avengers* is the rotating team, for sure [laughs]. **Joseph McCabe**



Guardians of the Galaxy: like the Avengers but completely utterly nuts.



Hope he's still got the guarantee.

that relationship evolve. That's another prime motivator, when he gets injured in the film. And Don Cheadle as Rhodey, now the Iron Patriot, on one side being a great close personal friend of Tony Stark's, and on another side working for the government, which Tony doesn't always see eye to eye with. We gave them a friendship and a banter that they hadn't had before. Frankly, in the first two movies, we saw Rhodey was sort of the conscience of Tony, saying, 'Tony, be careful with this'. But Rhodey is not like that in the comics. We wanted to make Rhodey his own man."

BLINDED BY SCIENCE

Another element of the *Iron Man* comics playing an integral role this time around is Extremis, the titular techno virus in Warren Ellis' 2005 six-issue story, and Maya Hansen, Stark's ex-lover and the scientist who developed it.

"In the Extremis comic book," says Black, "there's a type of thing that takes over and basically upgrades your DNA."

✓ WE'VE TRIED TO TAKE THIS VERY SCIENCE-FICTIONY CONCEPT OF SUPER PEOPLE, AND GROUND IT IN AN ELEMENT OF REALITY ✓

Sometimes you die. But if you live through the experience then you come out this changed thing. But the way they do it is the guy that does it is not some man chosen to be the super soldier – he's just a militia guy. There's an element of realism to it as well. So what we've tried to do is take this very science-fictiony concept of super people, and ground it in the type of people who volunteer for this being not necessarily super villains, but just

people who upgrade. I love the idea of a super villain that doesn't wear a cape, that doesn't wear a super suit. That goes around dressed as you are right now. As for the science of it, once again we've gone back to the comic books, and I think pretty much lifted the Maya Hansen idea, that she met him long ago and had the germ of an idea, which now has come to fruition full

War Machine's been given an Iron Patriot paintjob.





Is Iron Man guesting on David Letterman's sofa?

circle, but she's afraid because it's gotten out there. And we go from there.

"I think you'll be interested in the effect that we generate to demonstrate what Extremis does to a human being. It's a pretty interesting special visual effect. But we've deliberately stayed away from defining, 'Oh, it's nanites.' What we do keep from the comic is the idea that there's a slot in the brain that seems to have been dormant, but exists in human beings, almost as though it's waiting for human beings to find a way to fill it. It's been there forever."

Black, the scripting force behind films like *Lethal Weapon* and *The Last Boy Scout* who cast Downey in his directorial debut



Rebecca Hall as Maya Hansen. In the comics, she helps develop the Extremis techno-virus.

have had a cigarette dangling out of his mouth I would have, but it's Disney - I can't do it. Finding that little bit of Western, that little bit of noir in this is what Robert and I took the pleasure in - it's a superhero movie about a guy who is at heart a fierce individualist, a little bit of a cowboy - and got Robert a chance to play tough guy in this one."

"Robert expressed this desire," adds Black, "to, in his words, 'sort of leave everything on the floor. Whatever we haven't done in *Iron Man*, let's do it in this one.' The first couple of scripts he liked, which apparently was not... usual. He called me and said, 'I... I just read it. I like it.' I said, 'Why are you sounding so amazed? What's wrong?' He said, 'No, no. I hate things. I hate everything. I actually like this...'"

"So we were thrilled to have a piece that he actually responded to, that seemed like it had generated a stew that supported the character stuff we wanted to express, that it was a thrilling story. Hopefully we got it on film." **SFX**

Iron Man 3 is released on Friday 26 April by Disney.

ROBERT IS SO INEXTRICABLY TONY STARK. THE TIMES I'D HIT A WALL WERE IF I TRIED TO TELL HIM WHAT TONY STARK WOULD DO

Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, is known for a dark comedic touch. But he insists his star, and longtime friend, remains the source of Stark's irreverent humor.

"Robert is so inextricably Tony Stark. You can't really separate the two any more. The times I would hit a wall were if I ever tried to tell him what Tony Stark would do. That's not gonna happen. But by the same token he and I have this sort of understanding of rough, masculine, edgy characters. My favourite show growing up was *The Rockford Files*. Because this was a guy who always put one foot wrong in the morning and the coffee was burned. It's just that kind of slouchy, gruff, itchy-suit, always-sort-of-straightening-your-tie... If I could



Genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist. With a neat beard.

IRON FILINGS

Great Moments in Iron Man History

"IRON MAN IS BORN!"

Tales Of Suspense
Volume 1 #39
(March 1963)
Shellhead debuts in Stan Lee, Larry Lieber and Don Heck's origin tale, adapted faithfully (barring its Vietnam setting) by the first film.



"THE NEW IRON MAN BATTLES... THE MYSTERIOUS MR DOLL!"

Tales Of Suspense
Volume 1 #48
(December 1963)
With Mr Doll controlling his armour, Stark creates the iconic red-and-gold suit, offering an assortment of new gadgets - including roller skates!



"THE HANDS OF THE MANDARIN!"

Tales Of Suspense
Volume 1 #50
(February 1964)
Stark's greatest foe is introduced in a tale that pits Unibeam against the Chinese villain's ten rings of power.



"THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA PRINCE!"

Iron Man Volume 1 #120
(March 1979)
Fearful of losing his company, Tony develops a drinking problem and the classic "Demon In A Bottle" storyline begins.



"EXTREMIS - PART 1"

Iron Man: Extremis #1
(August 2006)
Warren Ellis and Adi Granov begin an influential new era, as Tony's armour becomes an extension of his body.



Joseph McCabe

LONDON HORROR COMIC



"A fine balance of horror and humour, scares and laughs."

*J.M. DeMatteis,
writer Brooklyn Dreams and
Justice League International*

"Some sick stuff, walking the line of the realm of wrong, but always entertaining."

Ain't it Cool News

"Beautifully drawn with tight scripts and a wit so sharp it could cut."

The Horror Channel

**ON SALE &
PREVIEW AT**

www.londonhorrorcomic.com

Gosh! Comics

Orbital Comics



Nicholas Hoult

The ex-*Skins* kid making a splash in the worlds of fantasy

WORDS BY STEPHEN P. KELLY PHOTOGRAPHY BY SARAH DUNN

This is Nicholas Hoult's year. As he sits before *SFX* in a London hotel, head shaven and muscles bulging, he's taking time off from filming *Mad Max: Fury Road* in Australia. After finishing that, he'll be moving on to film *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* ("I haven't seen the script yet, though..." he says). Before these films even come out, however, Hoult will be a star. In the next month, he's set to be the leading man in two potential hits: zombie rom-com *Warm Bodies* and Bryan Singer's *Jack The Giant Slayer*. The former, out this month, will be enough to secure his stardom with yet another teenage generation. The latter, a modern adaptation of fairytales *Jack And The Beanstalk* and *Jack The Giant Killer*, is what he's here today to talk to us about – but, even so, he has his eye on a lot more...

BIODATA

- **OCCUPATION:** Actor
- **BORN:** 7 December 1989
- **FROM:** Berkshire, England
- **GREATEST HITS:** *About A Boy*, *Skins*, *A Single Man*, *X-Men: First Class*, *Clash Of The Titans*
- **RANDOM FACT:** Post-*Skins*, Hoult considered quitting acting because of fan attention. "It was a bad day", he says.

► So what can you tell us about *Jack The Giant Slayer*?

It's a romp of a film. A family adventure full of humour, romance and peril. Then you get some spectacular scenery and special effects, all centred around a young princess and a young farm boy growing up, falling for each other and him becoming a hero. It's fun and, you know, you get all this great cast – Ewan McGregor, Stanley Tucci, Eddie Marsan and Bill Nighy playing a giant, which makes the giant real sinister. It's weird as he's the loveliest man playing an evil giant but he does a surprisingly good job of it.

► Did you pay a lot of attention to the original fairytale?

I read it and I tried to watch one of the old *Jack* movies and it was horrendous! I can't remember which one it was... but I thought, "We can't do any worse than that". There's something nice about this script, though, as it links into the fairytale we all know but develops it. It blends in but becomes its own story.

► Was there any other sort of preparation you had to do?

We learnt to ride a horse even though that was irrelevant in the end as I was only ever allowed to sit and trot on the horse and never allowed to go any faster. Whenever we did anything where they needed to go faster we'd be on a low rider being pulled along by a truck sitting on an oil drum being held up by elastic cables and we'd have to hump the oil drum to make it look

like you're on a horse. And then you'd get to the end of the scene and you'd be told, "Nic, your rhythm is all wrong!"

► Was there anything in particular that attracted you to the role?

I just like adventure films. I liked that it was a kind of a simple, straightforward guy who was looking for an adventure, and who wants to change his life. And Bryan Singer was a big draw. He's a great storyteller.

► How did you find working with Bryan?

It was great. I'd met him before obviously as a producer on *X-Men*. But he was preparing this while he was shooting that.

► So you must have been pretty thrilled when he was brought in to direct the next *X-Men*?

Yeah. And it looks like I'm going to be in it, so I was even more pleased with that! I enjoyed working with him, and it's fun, and he can say, "That looks rubbish. What are you doing?" and I'd be like, "I have no idea what I'm doing, obviously." And also he knows so much about the *X-Men* world and is a real fanboy, and did such a good job with the first films that I think it's great that he's back directing.

► What with this film, *X-Men* and *Warm Bodies*, would it be fair to say you're more attracted to fantastical roles?

Yeah, it's the escapism. I think it's good to be transported. And from an acting point of view as well I think to be able to go and experience something completely different. It's a lot of fun to go out and your job is that they've built a massive beanstalk and you can go and climb it. Or you're a zombie and you just have to groan and walk around and be a zombie for the day. It's kind of mad that that's my job.

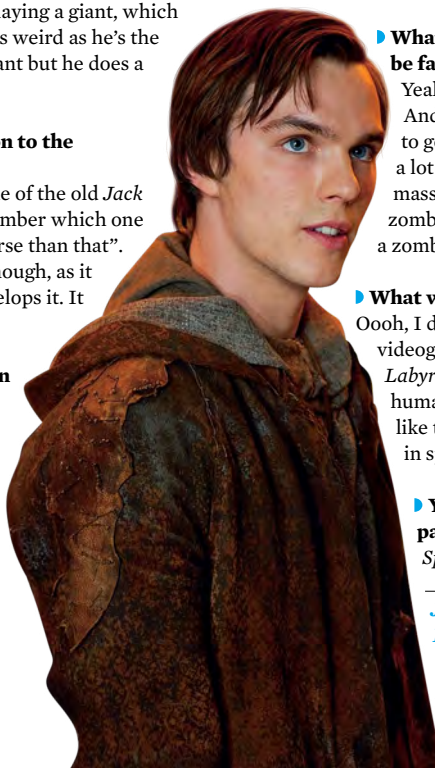
► What would be your dream sci-fi or fantasy project then?

Oooh, I don't know. There's definitely going to be some good videogame adaptations soon... I like worlds such as *Pan's Labyrinth* and films like that where they can tell a very human story but in this strange setting and background. I'd like to do a full-on sci-fi at one point. Maybe something set in space. I really love *Moon*.

► You mentioned videogame adaptations – any in particular you like?

Spyro The Dragon – as the dragon! **SFX**

Jack The Giant Slayer is released by Warner Bros on Friday 22 March.





THE FUTURE

REMEMBERING GERRY ANDERSON

WE WERE AT PINEWOOD to discuss a new project when there was a knock at the door," remembers scriptwriter Phil Ford. "A guy walked in with a bottle of champagne. He said Gerry didn't know him, but he

had heard it was his birthday and he wanted to say thank you – his shows had been the inspiration for him working in the film business. I heard lots of stories like that, people inspired to work in TV, to become engineers, rocket engineers and pilots."

It's difficult to sum up succinctly what Gerry Anderson's special talents were. In a way Gerry Anderson wasn't just a producer but a genre all to himself.

Born in 1929 in Hampstead, London, his upbringing was tough, dominated by poverty and his parents' internecine war. His older brother's death during World War Two had a deep psychological impact.

He made his industry debut in 1946 as an assistant editor, a job he discovered he had a real talent for. Former colleague David Elliott recalls: "Oh he was very good. I remember a picture he sound-edited called *They Who Dare*. Everybody was amazed because during this piece of stock footage of aircraft being shot at, rather than just running a generic bangs and flashes soundtrack over it he synced each individual bit of flack. Amazing."

Following two years National Service in the RAF Anderson returned to the cutting rooms. He married Betty Wrightman in 1952 by whom he had two daughters, Joy and Linda.

The arrival of commercial television in 1955 paved the way to Anderson's success. In 1956 Anderson and colleague Arthur Provis, with others, formed Pentagon Films. It was there two serendipitous events would take

place. Firstly, a two-line advertisement in the local paper for "Part time typist – Afternoons" yielded a response from Anderson's future wife Sylvia Thamm. Secondly, Kellogg's commissioned them to make a commercial featuring Noddy – with puppets. It was this commercial that brought children's writer Roberta Leigh knocking.

INTO TELEVISION

"A woman called Roberta Leigh turned up one day with 52 scripts for a series called *Twizzle*," remembered Anderson. "She said they were for puppets and I nearly vomited on the floor." By this time, Anderson and Provis had grown disillusioned with their Pentagon partners and decided to go it alone incorporating AP Films (Anderson Provis Films – later Century 21). On a meagre budget of just £450 per episode they accepted the commission.

Alas, Anderson hated the marionettes but here perhaps his greatest attribute came into play: whatever the difficulty, he was determined to make the best of it. He also wanted to produce his own product. It was with puppet Western *Four Feather Falls* that what Anderson would later dub "Supermarionation" was born. If he couldn't work with real actors, then he was determined to make these lifeless forms on strings as human as possible. Faces were sculpted in

fibreglass and fitted with solenoids that, through a gadget that converted dialogue into electrical impulses, moved the lower lip, allowing the puppets to "speak". Frustrated because only the cameraman could see what was happening during shooting, he hit upon the idea of putting a video camera in the viewfinder producing the world's earliest, albeit ➔



Captains Scarlet and Blue and Lieutenant Green infiltrate the Mysterons' Moon complex.

WAS

FAB!

SFX looks back on the wondrous life of one of science fiction's true legends.
By Stephen La Rivière

REMEMBERING GERRY

"If Gerry had a talent it was hiring and trusting people to do the job they were required to do. I can't remember a time when Derek [Meddings] or I was challenged to do better."

Special effects director
Brian Johnson



IMAGES © ITV/REX (2)

GERRY ANDERSON

primitive, "video assist". "Arthur and Gerry were a bit like the ant and the grasshopper," says puppeteer Roger Woodburn. "Gerry was destined to go somewhere and Arthur was a bit, 'Oh, that's new. Not sure.'" Sure enough, Arthur, not finding himself in harmony with Gerry's aspirations, left. "Gerry was a perfectionist," says David Elliott. "I remember him being in deep despair during *Four Feather Falls* about being able to see the wires."

Four Feather Falls ran for one series after which backers Granada stated that they didn't require any more of AP Films' unique product. By the middle of 1960 with just a few minor pieces keeping them ticking over, it became clear that the writing was on the wall for AP Films. Enter Lew Grade.

Anderson vividly recalled the fateful pitch meeting for *Supercar*: "I said, 'We've budgeted it out and it will cost £3,000 per episode.' And he exploded, 'I can't afford to pay you that! This is a kids' series!'" The next day the budget was cut, Lew offered them a contract, and the historic partnership was formed.

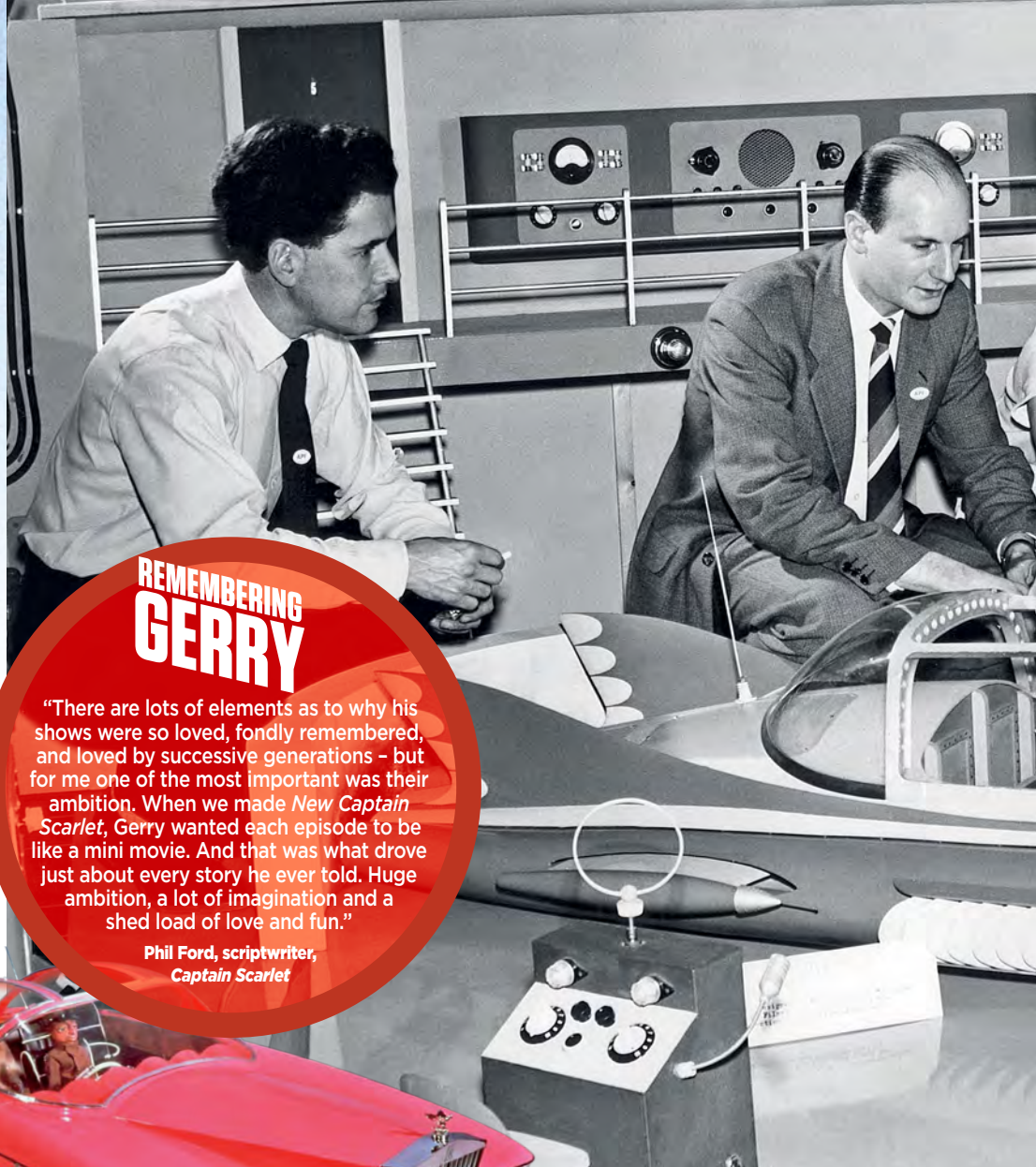
FERTILE PARTNERSHIP

The team were under pressure to get the series ready to air by January 1961. Meanwhile, following his divorce from Betty, Gerry and Sylvia found the time to get married. This led to Sylvia's role increasing and by the end of the '60s they would be known as a winning husband and wife team: Gerry had the technical knowhow and fertile brain, Sylvia was a '60s gal and made the shows swing.

Primitive by today's standards, *Supercar* launched Gerry Anderson "full boost vertical" into the space age. However, its origins weren't born of a specific love of sci-fi but more through Anderson's quest to make the puppets as realistic as possible. Walking convincingly was well nigh impossible but placing them in futuristic vehicles reduced jerky puppet movement to a desirable minimum. This was ingeniously extended to a series of now iconic "launch sequences" in which the puppets would smoothly board their craft through a variety of moving pathways and chairs.

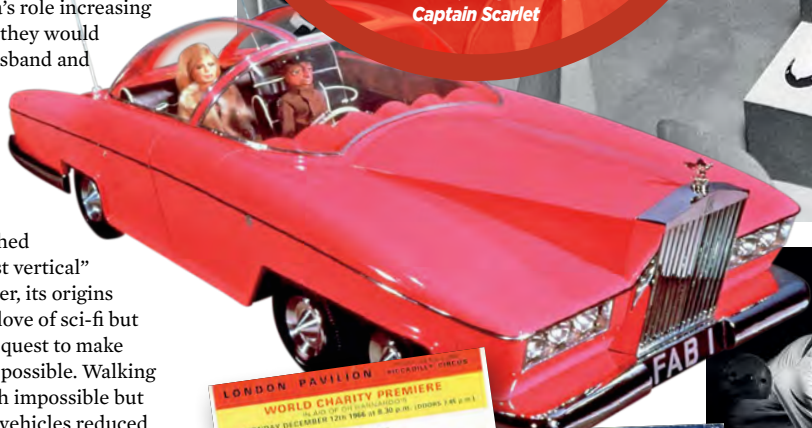
With the real-life space race underway, Gerry and his team inadvertently tapped into a zeitgeist which was expanded with the stories of the futuristic spaceship *Fireball XL5*. Both *Supercar* and *Fireball* were astonishing successes and so Grade bought AP Films outright before ploughing serious cash into their next production, the all-colour *Stingray*. "Every show we did was a rehearsal for *Thunderbirds*," Sylvia Anderson once stated.

Anderson recalled Grade's reaction to the first 25-minute episode of *Thunderbirds*. "He said, 'Gerry. This is not a television series. I was absolutely distraught. He then said, 'Gerry - this is a feature film! You have to make them an hour!'" *Thunderbirds* were GO!



"There are lots of elements as to why his shows were so loved, fondly remembered, and loved by successive generations - but for me one of the most important was their ambition. When we made *New Captain Scarlet*, Gerry wanted each episode to be like a mini movie. And that was what drove just about every story he ever told. Huge ambition, a lot of imagination and a shed load of love and fun."

Phil Ford, scriptwriter,
Captain Scarlet



John Read sets up another exciting adventure of *Four Feather Falls*.



Clockwise, from left: *Thunderbirds Are Go* movie premiere invitation; *Supercar* Gold Key comic; *Thunderbirds Give-A-Show* projector; Derek Meddings' original design for FAB 1.





Gerry, Sylvia, Reg Hill and John Read at the *Supercar* press launch.



The *Supercar* team prepare to go "Full Boost Vertical".

Anderson's career flew to dizzying heights during the roughly two-year period that *Thunderbirds* was in production. Yet still he felt cruelly short of achieving his true ambitions. The glittering success of the series at home did not translate overseas as it failed to secure the essential American sale.

However, the cancellation of *Thunderbirds* did not signal the end for Anderson, and Grade still believed in his golden boy. Further iconic marionette masterpieces were developed in the form of the daringly sadistic *Captain*



Shaun Whittaker-Cooke launches Thunderbird 2.

"EACH SHOW ANDERSON PUSHED TO BE TECHNICALLY BETTER THAN THE LAST"

Scarlet and the "kids can be Bond" format of *Joe 90*. Each show Anderson pushed to be technically more proficient than the last. However, they were rapidly drowning in their own successful product. In 1968 a live-action feature film produced by Century 21 called *Doppelgänger* convinced Grade that their unique style of film-making would transfer to live actors. *UFO* was given the go-ahead and the puppets were consigned to the skip.

CHASING THE DOLLAR

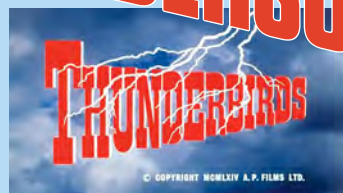
Unfortunately for Anderson, as he entered the '70s he found that American ratings-chasing became a serious issue. "As we were developing a second series one of the guys in America phoned Lew and said the ratings are dropping off *UFO*," recalled Anderson. "We made 26 shows, they ran for 17 weeks leading the country, but because they dipped [they said] 'cancel the show.'" From *UFO*'s ashes rose *Space: 1999*, allegedly the most expensive show in the world at the time and widely regarded as one of Anderson's great achievements particularly noted for its world-leading special effects.

The mid to late '70s was a tough time for Anderson. Lew Grade found himself moving away from television production and thus *Space: 1999* marked the end of their long and fruitful partnership. Furthermore, after years of being increasingly strained, his marriage to Sylvia finally collapsed.

Without the backing of Lew Grade and thus the final disbanding of the team that he had worked with for 16 years Anderson was in limbo. The →



ICONIC ANDERSON



THUNDERBIRDS TITLE SEQUENCE

5 It's reported that upon first seeing the opening titles an American executive cried, "But you've given the whole damn show away!" *Thunderbirds* especially is archetypal Gerry. Dramatic countdown, dynamic editing, unforgettable music and a big bang.

BATTLE STATIONS

4 Remembering Sam Goldwyn's statement that "movies must move" Anderson was always concerned about his puppet stars' lack of mobility. The answer? Move everything else! Marineville descending into the ground in *Stingray* accompanied by that drumbeat is simply FAB.

MYSTERON RINGS

3 The sinister green rings that marked the resurrection of someone or something were, bizarrely, partly inspired by a shapely girl: "I'd seen a television commercial and I'd been impressed by the way the Woolmark logo had been projected over the contours of a girl's chest!" remembered Anderson.



FAB VEHICLES

2 Thunderbird 2 is probably the most instantly recognisable vehicle. But is it better than the Eagle? Or *Stingray*? Or *Fireball XL5*? Design was always such a strong element in Gerry's shows - any attempts at believability were never allowed to undermine the aesthetics.

STAND BY FOR ACTION!

1 Perhaps the most enduring iconography of all: the launch sequences that featured in so many of his shows. Sliding chutes, revolving doors, chairs that move and dynamic craft. The only disappointment? Gerry's vision of the future was almost always more exciting than the real thing.



man who once earned a reported £1,000 a week was broke and found himself having to search for a backer again.

One ray of light during this period was Anderson's marriage to Mary Robins in 1981. Their enduring and happy relationship produced a son, Jamie.

In the early '80s Anderson teamed up with a new business partner Christopher Burr who, unlike Lew, recognised the potential of the puppet-loving Japanese market. This led to Anderson's return to puppets, albeit in sophisticated glove puppet form with *Terrahawks*. The show achieved modest success and re-launched Anderson's career for a new generation.

Counter-intuitively, launching projects in the latter half of Anderson's career proved more difficult. Although his biggest production of the '90s was the multi-million pound *Space Precinct*, it wasn't his most successful. BBC Two's repeat of *Thunderbirds*, now 25 years old, launched a new mania for Supermarionation with the must-have Christmas toy being a Tracy Island play set. Anderson didn't receive a penny having sold his rights in the 1970s.

ONE LAST SHOW

Deservedly awarded an MBE in 2001, he still had his gaze set on the future. "Making these shows was his life, and he was always – right up into his last years – looking for the next idea," says Phil Ford.

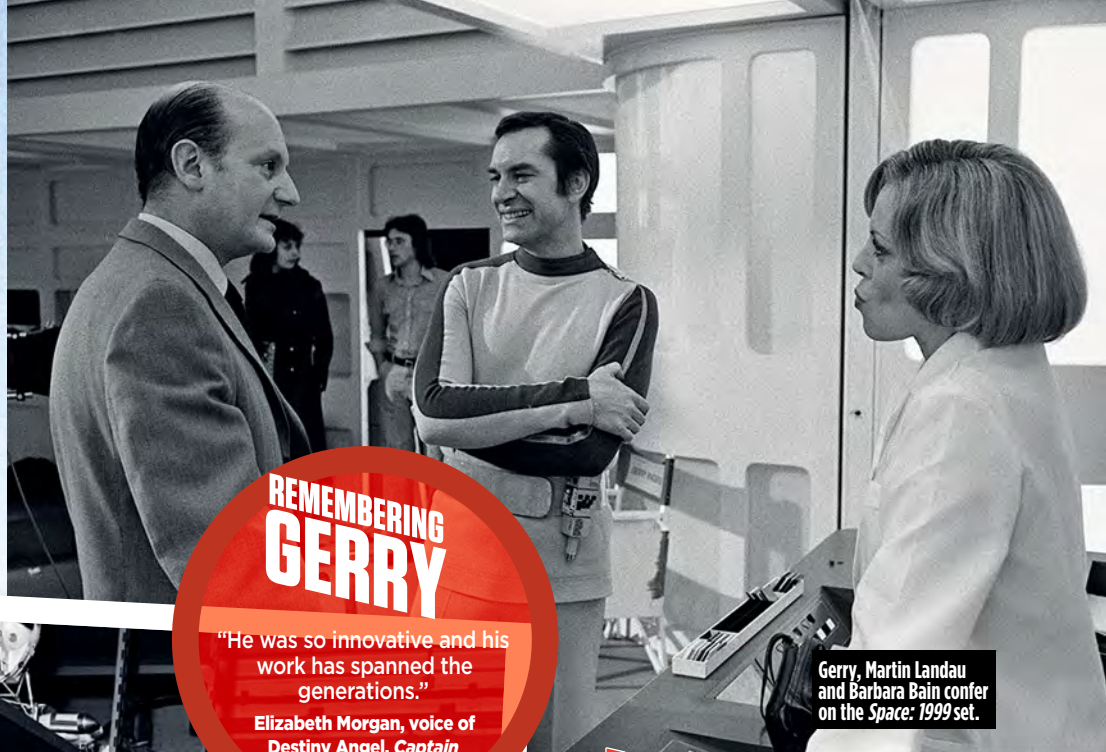
In 2005 Anderson set out to break new ground again, raising £20 million to resurrect the indestructible *Captain Scarlet* in CGI. Invariably dismissive of his own masterpieces Anderson for once seemed rightly proud of his current achievement. "We made what I, without any shame, say is the biggest technical achievement of my career." Blinkered politics at ITV led to the show being unceremoniously cut up and stuffed into the middle of the Saturday morning children's show *Ministry Of Mayhem*. "I won't mince my words," said Anderson ruefully. "They destroyed it."

Anderson tried to plough on regardless and revive his greatest hit *Thunderbirds*. Unfortunately, the world where one man pitched an idea and another immediately approved it had gone. Now an army of committees decided everything. Gerry failed to secure the rights to remake his own show.

By this time, Anderson had mellowed and came to appreciate his past works. "When I look at my career from afar, even I am amazed at how many shows I have made. No less than 18 series, 800 episodes. It's been a wonderful career and one that I'm now very proud of."

In 2012 Anderson announced publicly that he had Alzheimer's. He worked to make something positive from this destructive disease and, evoking the "help others" spirit of International Rescue, became a celebrity patron of the Alzheimer's Society charity.

Anderson passed away on Boxing Day 2012. Former colleagues and fans travelled from across the world to attend his funeral and pay



REMEMBERING GERRY

"He was so innovative and his work has spanned the generations."

Elizabeth Morgan, voice of
Destiny Angel, *Captain
Scarlet*

Gerry, Martin Landau
and Barbara Bain confer
on the *Space: 1999* set.



Derek Meddings (left)
with Skydiver from *UFO*.

UNSEEN ANDERSON



With so many shows to his name it seems inconceivable that there might have been more. The early '90s saw Gerry Anderson talking about *GFI*, a cel-animated show in which G-Force Intergalactic, a special task force, combats major crimes and disasters. One episode was made before production problems shut the project down. Another show that reached quite advanced planning stage was *Thunderhawks*, a potential live-action concept from Anderson and Reg Hill developed in conjunction with the Japanese. Elements of the show eventually turned up in *Terrahawks*, a Japanese show called *Thunderhawks* and to an extent *Thunderbirds 2086*. Perhaps the maddest Anderson project never to make it to the screen though was *T-Force*, a 1980s update of *Thunderbirds* that would have seen Lady Penelope given a pink Porsche and gold hair to allow her to receive radio transmissions!

"WITH HIS UNIQUE VISION HE TOOK PUPPETRY INTO AN ENTIRELY NEW DIMENSION"

tribute to the man who had made the future so exciting.

Though Anderson had probably never manipulated a puppet, he will always be associated with them. With his editorial brilliance, his obsessive commitment, his ability to develop the best in others and his unique vision he took puppetry into an entirely new dimension.

Anderson always seemed surprised by his success, but others saw it coming from afar. After meeting Anderson and his new team in 1957, puppeteer Joy Laurey wrote: "They are all most keen to make these the best puppet films ever made. I too feel that this is a wonderful opportunity, and may well be the beginning of something big!" **SFX**





BRITSCIFI

09-10 March 2013 • 10:00 - 17:00



Paul Darrow - Blake's 7



Robert Llewellyn - Red Dwarf



Chris Barrie - Red Dwarf



Danny John Jules - Red Dwarf



Zienia Merton - Space: 1999, Doctor Who



Prentis Hancock - Space: 1999, Doctor Who



Colin Baker - Doctor Who



Paul McGann - Doctor Who, Minister of Chance



Sophie Aldred - Doctor Who, Minister of Chance



Lee Sullivan - UK Comic Strip Artist: 2000AD, Transformers



Nick Briggs - Doctor Who, Torchwood



Lauren Crace - Minister of Chance, Eastenders



Julian Wadham - Minister of Chance



Minister of Chance

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- Talks, workshops and craft tables

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- Meet Mat Irvine with the original K9 and ORAC

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- Blast off with your favourite Thunderbird craft
- See Stingray, Fireball XL5 and F&B1
- A full size recreation of the Moonbase Control Centre from Space 1999
- Q&A hosted by Jamie Anderson and friends



For full details of event and times/dates of appearances visit
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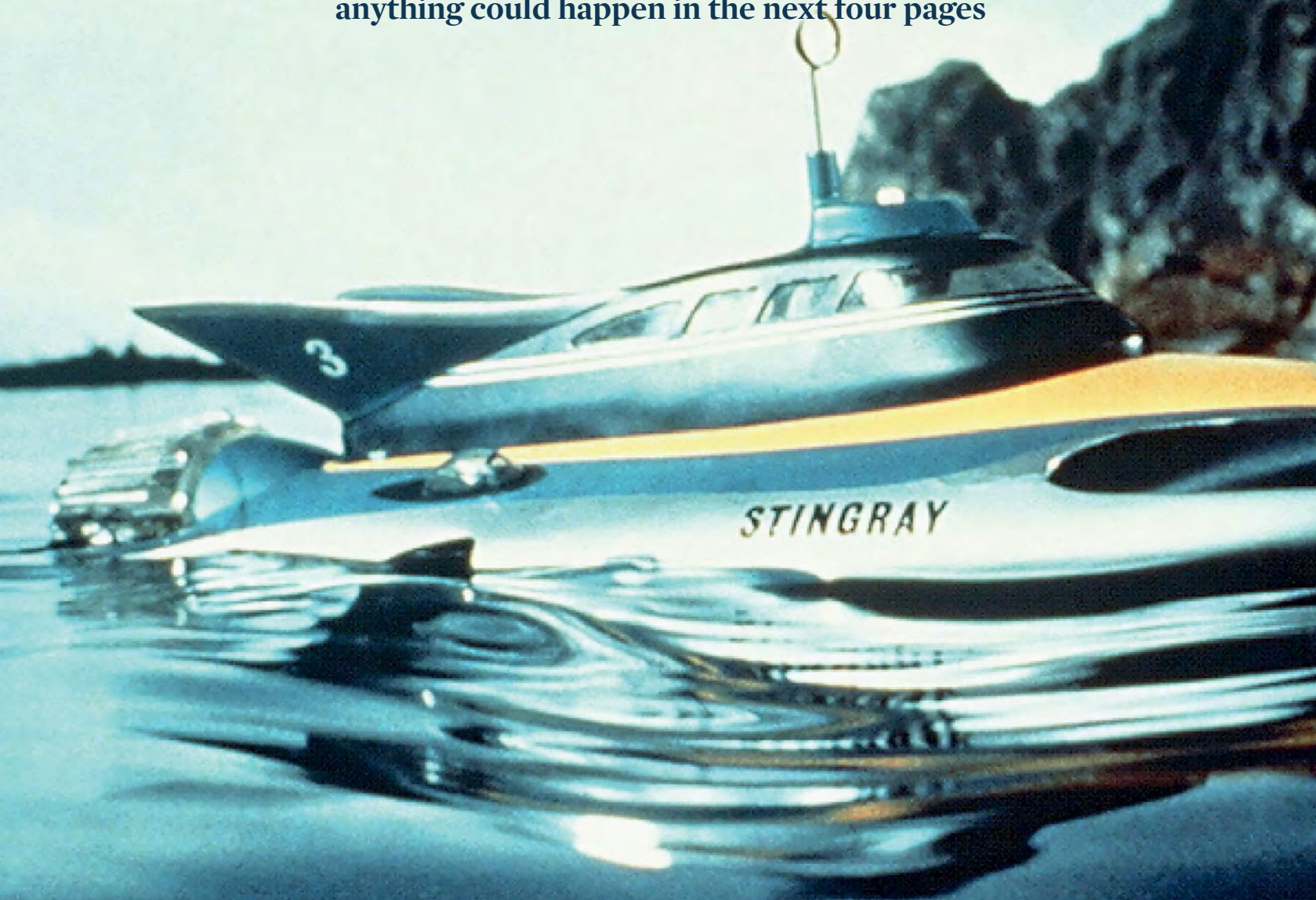
TIME MACHINE

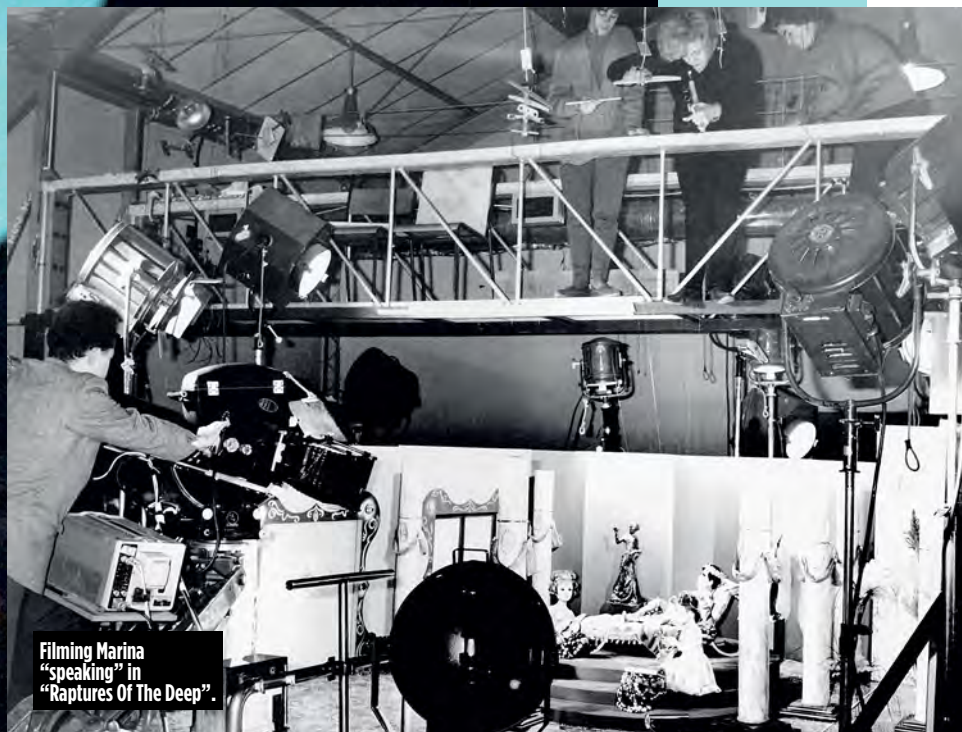
THE STORY BEHIND THE SF AND FANTASY OF YESTERYEAR

1964

STINGRAY

Stephen La Rivière looks at Gerry Anderson's aquatic epic –
anything could happen in the next four pages



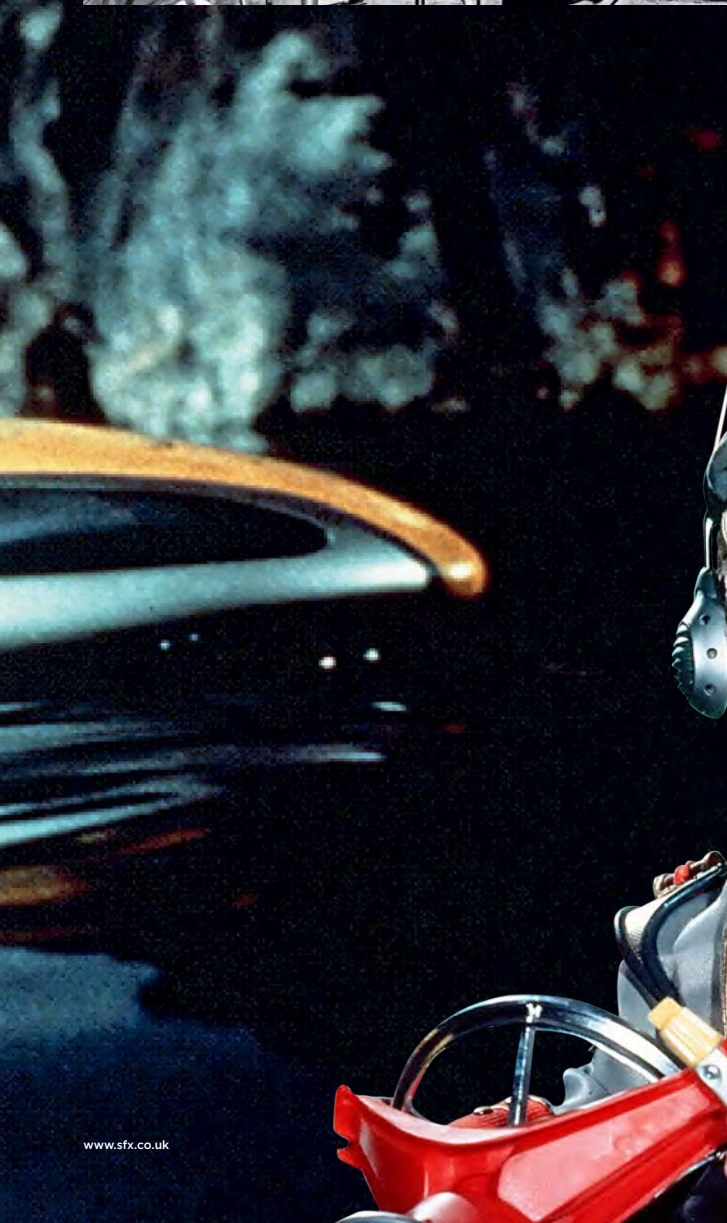


Filming Marina "speaking" in "Raptures Of The Deep".



Perhaps Gerry didn't really think colour TV would take off?

Teufel – fish god or sushi speciality?



"STAND BY FOR ACTION!" WAS THE CRY THAT opened all 39 episodes of Gerry Anderson's underwater adventure series *Stingray*. Unless, that is, you were one of the people watching on television at home, in which case you would more likely have heard the slightly less exciting "nd By For Action!" Neglecting to leave a few frames of silence at the beginning of the picture in order to accommodate a slow fade across from the continuity announcement illustrates that AP Films didn't make adventures for the small screen. Their stock in trade was to produce half-hour epics worthy of the big screen, where the action started from the very first frame. Their latest offering, the first major show in the UK to be filmed entirely in colour, was no exception.

The production of *Stingray* is a key moment in Anderson's career. Although his previous shows were hugely successful, it was with *Stingray* that things really started to swing, thanks to a crew who were really hitting their stride. That, and the small matter of an enormous investment courtesy of ATV chairman Lew Grade, who liked the company so much he bought it...

"I got into Lew's office," said Gerry Anderson, "and he sat me down in front of his desk, and he looked at me straight in the eye and he said, 'Gerry, I've decided to buy your company.' Now, I have to tell you that I was deeply offended because we had our company. And we had our own letterhead, with our names printed on it. And we had a telephone. And a filing cabinet. And here he was wanting to buy our company and I thought to myself, 'What a bloody cheek this bloke's got.' I mean, he didn't say, 'I'd like to buy your company.' No, 'I'm going to buy your company.' Not, 'Would you like to sell your company,' no, 'I've decided to buy your company.' I sat there thinking, 'What a damned cheek he's got!'" And then he told me how much he was prepared to pay... and I remember thinking, 'What a good idea that he should buy my company!'"

Lew Grade, ever keen to exploit the lucrative American market to its full potential, threw open the ATV coffers in order to allow Gerry, Sylvia and co the chance to make something really special. The company relocated from their small factory on the Slough

Trading Estate to larger premises around the corner. The new warehouse might not have had the glamour of Pinewood, or the sense of history of Shepperton, but it was fully decked out with state of the art gear; a self contained studio

that was described in ITC publicity as “the largest, most modern studios of the kind in the world – a fairyland Hollywood devoted to the making of Supermarionation films.” The publicity went on to note that “The studio has its own experimental section, vital for carrying out the work so necessary in the production of a form of film-making which progresses from day-to-day, with new problems cropping up almost every hour. That’s why *Stingray* contains so many scenes which would have been technically impossible only a short time ago.”

SLEEK OPERATOR

In contrast to the technology that helped make the series, the premise was, like many of Anderson’s other shows, not especially sophisticated. In spite of top billing on the opening credits (other, lesser puppet actors didn’t even receive that) Captain Troy Tempest was not the star; that honour fell to the super-sleek atomic submarine of the title, *Stingray*, which repeatedly brought in the loyal “kidult” audience. Each week would see *Stingray* patrolling the waters of the sea piloted by Tempest and his trustworthy Hydrophone Operator, “Phones”. When they’re not doing battle with the main villain of the piece, Titan, or his slimy, incompetent minion X20 (who lives, not under the sea, but in a superficially ramshackle house on the Island of Lemoy with the world’s largest high-def black and white TV), the *Stingray* crew find themselves encountering the other diverse, intelligent alien species that have remained undetected for many years. Hopefully it’s not a reflection on the writers’ attitudes towards conservation that many of these previously undiscovered species are blown up before the 25 minutes is out.

Operations are controlled from the (obligatory) top-secret base, Marineville, a high-tech military HQ situated on the west coast of America that, when under attack and Battle Stations is sounded, descends below ground in unique Anderson style. WASP (World Aquanaut Security Patrol) is headed up by Commander Sam Shore, a gruff hoverchair user. He’s ably assisted by his daughter, Atlanta, who is in something of a love-triangle with the best-

“It didn’t make any sense for us to try and set the show in England”



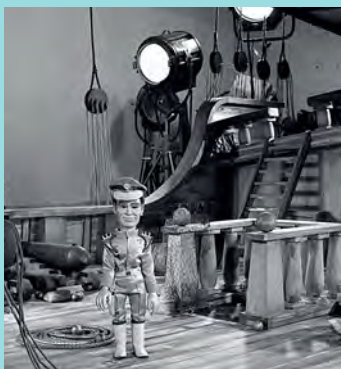
remembered character of the show (thanks to the closing theme tune) Aqua Marina. Admittedly, on paper it doesn’t sound like the most exciting premise in the world. Whilst it’s true to say that APF liked to emphasise the technology – unsurprising given Anderson’s embarrassment about working with puppets, and the ever developing Special Effects Unit which was well on its way to becoming an industry leader – the characters and the plots have real warmth and charm that is missing from later, more sophisticated shows such as *Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons* and *UFO*. Reflecting the desire for sales in the USA, the whole cast is “American”. “It didn’t

make any sense for us to try and make these shows set in England,” said Gerry. “Can you imagine a broadcaster saying, ‘There’s great excitement in this country at the moment, because the first rocket to go to the Moon is being launched in Scunthorpe tonight!’ So, we were able to use American characters to make the stories believable, but at the same time it also suited out financial needs.”

Several months passed between the acquisition of AP Films in late 1962 and the beginning of production on *Stingray* in June 1963. Aside from the fitting-out of the studios there was another major hurdle to overcome: the crash-course in learning how to film in colour effectively. At this time, the UK was still nearly four years away from its first colour broadcasting service on BBC Two and it wouldn’t be until 1969 when ITV began its service. Thus, *Stingray* was produced in colour solely to make it more appealing to the Americans. “It was quite a frightening experience,” recalled Gerry. As a precaution, Anderson despatched designer and company director Reg Hill to America

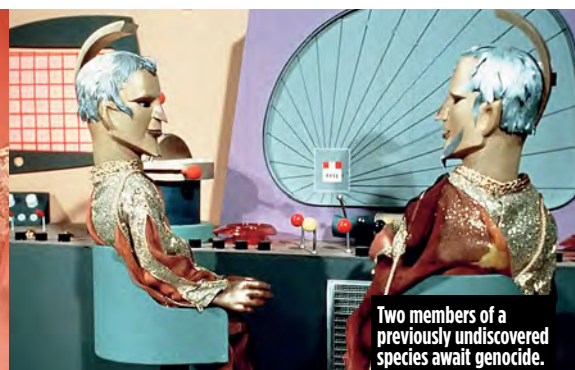
Old News

Gerry Anderson was always looking ahead to his next project. Thus, when *Stingray* premiered on television in October 1964 photographers and journalists eager to see these exciting undersea worlds might have been a tad disappointed. Production had been over several months and AP Films was at work on *Thunderbirds* and seemingly uninterested in the past. Puppets and models were posed on often inappropriate sets built for the next show. In one picture *Stingray* is merely dumped in the desert from the episode “Pit Of Peril”!





Titan comes out of his shell to issue orders.



Two members of a previously undiscovered species await genocide.

Stingray visits Tracy Island for TV21.



Derek Meddings (left) helps prepare the large Stingray model.

in order to investigate the potential perils and pitfalls. Reg soon came back with a list of colours that couldn't be used effectively which resulted in rapid repainting of the newly constructed sets. "It didn't take long to figure out and we used it very successfully," continued Anderson. "If you look at the first few films we made in colour, they all have one thing in common: when you looked at the screen it said, 'We are shooting in colour!' Everything was very colourful, which of course, we wouldn't do today." The irony was not lost on Anderson that having taken so much effort to film each instalment in colour (or VIDEOLOR according to the opening titles) that a black and white print then had to be struck for broadcast in the home country.

MAKING IT REAL

The basic techniques that made a "Supermarionation" production a cut-above *Andy Pandy* and co were now well established. However, the team was always looking for ways to improve. The puppet technicians that, just a few years before, had cracked the age-old problem of producing characters that could "talk" were now looking at other ways to improve the realism. Industry magazine *Kine Weekly* reported: "A former objection to puppets is that, no matter what they are saying, grave or gay, their expressions have remained unchanged; one might see Venus imparting the gravest news, still with her habitual smile. This is now being remedied." With latex and rubber still in its infancy, the characters were furnished with rigid fibreglass heads. Therefore, in order to get expressions to fit the mood of the scene multiple heads were created for each performer: "neutral", "blinker", "smiler" and "frowner". Additionally, the wooden hands of the past gave way to mobile, poseable rubber hands. For actual movement though, a real hand would appear to do the impossible. "You would have a shot of a puppet leaning forward, very painfully, to pick something up," remembers director Alan Pattillo. "Then you would cut to a human hand. I don't think it ever convinced the audience, but that was part of the charm. It was almost real, but not quite."



The most impressive leap in quality was made over in Derek Meddings' special effects department. Released from the confines of a tiny warehouse room, the boys now had space and money to produce the world of the 21st century.

As the show revolved around a submarine, the majority of the effects, unsurprisingly, involved water. Surface water shots were comparatively easy to achieve: two "tanks" were constructed with a system where water was continually pumped over the edge in order to create an artificial "infinite horizon".

The underwater scenes, however, were more of a head-scratcher. Back in the days of *Supercar* Reg Hill postulated that if ultra-thin aquaria were built and populated with fish of different sizes to produce the illusion of scale and depth, then models could be flown behind the tank, yet appear to be underwater in spite of never getting remotely wet. The effect worked well, and with *Stingray* the method was refined to produce even greater realism. The iconic shot of Stingray exiting the launch tunnel in a plume of bubbles was particularly sophisticated, using three "layers": a matte painting on the front glass of the tank "completes" an incomplete rock face miniature behind the tank and disguises an air line inside that produces the jet of bubbles.

As is typical of a Supermarionation show, it's the combination of talents from various fields that serve to produce the magic. Well sculpted characters, voiced by top artists, interacting with inventively designed miniatures in pacily edited films, scored by great incidental music. The results were impressive enough that in 1964, prior to the transmission, ATV's chairman declared: "I have never predicted the success of any television series but, on this occasion, I do so without hesitation." Ironically, the series never really caught the love of America it so flagrantly courted. However, elsewhere the series was a huge success, and that it still has a television audience standing by for action half a century since it went into production is a testament to a team who didn't create something ephemeral for television, but mini-movies designed to stand the test of time. **SFX**

Emma Newman

The rising Brit author who's adding mad sorcerers to *Downton Abbey*-type lit

WORDS BY JONATHAN WRIGHT PORTRAIT BY JOBY SESSIONS

It's rarely that an author can tell *SFX* exactly where a book sprang from, but Emma Newman can remember precisely how the fictional world featured in *Between Two Thorns* began life. One morning, she woke up with a story in her head, which she "dashed off" and, as a member of the Friday Flash writers' community, posted online.

"Sale Or Return" centred on a shopkeeper, the proprietor of the Emporium of Things in Between and Besides, and his encounter with a customer who brings in a real live faerie in a bell jar, convinced it's a "clever hologram" for which she can't find the instructions. "I came back that afternoon, and people had gone wild for it, they loved it," Newman remembers, as she sips tea in a Bath café.

So what was it about the story that so attracted people? A clue lies in Newman's own description of the world she's created. "It's kind of like *Downton Abbey* but with mad sorcerers, evil fairies and detective noir," she says. We might also add urban fantasy to this mix, because the action in *Between Two Thorns* plays out in different realities.

There's our own world, Mundanus, yet there's also the Nether where feuding dynastic families favoured – and used – by the Fae live and never age. With the heads of the families still ruling with outdated social values, it's closer to Regency England than modern-day Britain, and forms a buffer of sorts between Mundanus and the prison where the Fae reside, Exilium.

"You have people in positions of power in the hierarchies who have been alive for hundreds of years and are trapped in their old ways of thinking," Newman says. This in itself explains in great part why Newman's heroine, Cathy, has run away to Mundanus.

Cathy finds it hard to fit in and in this, says Newman, she reflects her creator. However, there are distinct advantages to kicking against conventional ways of doing things. Take the writing of *Between Two Thorns* and its forthcoming sequels in the Split Worlds sequence. While most aspiring authors struggle to balance a day job with writing, Newman found a way to sidestep early mornings and late nights.

"I had this light bulb moment where I thought, 'Well if people find venture-capital investment for technology IP, why couldn't we do it with creative IP?' I went downstairs to my husband and I said, 'I've had this idea,' and he said, 'That sounds really crazy, do it.' So I phoned up a friend of mine who's a successful businessman and I said, 'Do you think this is a goer?'"

"He said, 'Come up on the train,' so I went up the next day and we were up until five o'clock in the morning thrashing the ideas out. He helped me put together a business plan, and I went and found venture-capital funding so I could leave my job and write full-time for two years."

Originally, the plan was to set up a business to publish the books herself, hiring in an editor, but this changed when Newman went to the launch for Adam Christopher's *Empire State*. Egged on by novelist Paul Cornell, she told Angry Robot editor Lee Harris about what she was doing. "He just went, 'Who are you? What are you doing? That's mental and I'd be quite curious to read this.'"

On the basis of this reading, Harris offered her a deal, which in turn led to "quite frantic, urgent" but amicable – "Someone who is really evil doesn't invest in strange authors..." – renegotiations with her investor. Newman was free to sign on with her "favourite publisher".

It's a fresh start, but also an end of sorts in that Newman's now a "proper" novelist after years, at least as she tells it, of getting sidetracked. Born in Cornwall to parents who both served with the Royal Navy, she wrote as a child. This was a way to escape troubles at home, although she clearly adores her father, a survival expert. "When the zombie apocalypse comes, I'm going to find my dad because he'll know what to do," she says.

Despite such difficulties, she made it to Oxford. This was in part because she impressed admissions staff with a science fiction story she included with her application, a last-minute substitute for an essay on Shakespeare. Studying psychology, she planned to work as a counsellor but only after she'd lived a bit first in order to develop "some kind of credibility".

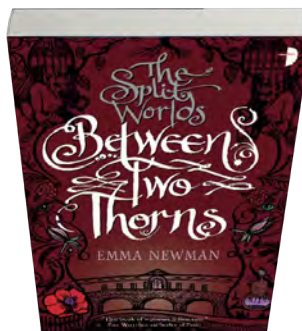
Various jobs followed, including dressmaking, teaching and copywriting, but the move into counselling never happened. Instead, after years of not writing she came back to her childhood love seven years ago, and her published work already also encompasses a short-story collection, *From Dark Places*, and a YA novel, *20 Years Later*, about which she's reluctant to speak because of a dispute with its publisher.

It's been a long road, and there have been troubles along the way, notably an ongoing struggle with "a low-level, generalised anxiety disorder", but Emma Newman is currently in a good place. "I'm gibberingly insane, but productively insane," she laughs, "I can still write books, thankfully." **SFX**

"I'm gibberingly insane, but productively insane"

BIODATA

- **OCCUPATION:** Novelist
- **BORN:** 1976
- **FROM:** Penzance
- **GREATEST HITS:** *Between Two Thorns* is the first entry in the Split Worlds sequence, which may eventually run to four novels.
- **RANDOM FACT:** Newman was also into role-playing games. This taught her "about plot, pacing, storytelling and what keeps people engaged".



Between Two Thorns will be published by Angry Robot on Thursday 7 March.

EMMA NEWMAN



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COUCH POTATO

From left: Nick, Will, Rich and baby Eleanor, Charlotte and Jordan.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES LOOKER

Sci-Fi Babies

The Couch crew have the mother of all tantrums during an evening of baby-based entertainment...

Here at *SFX* we like to think of ourselves as one big family. With countless late nights under our belts and even more long evenings in the pub together, it's amazing our flesh and blood families ever get a look in.

So when baby Eleanor (proud parents: Rich and Charlotte) started to make regular appearances in *SFX* Towers it was only a matter of time before she wriggled her way onto these very pages. And what better way to celebrate than with a selection of films and TV shows featuring some of the most memorable baby-themed stories committed to screen?



IMAGE COURTESY THE KOBAL COLLECTION (1)

Torchwood "Something Borrowed" (2008)



After the adults have had their afternoon nap, the gang get ready to throw their toys out of the pram in spectacular fashion. We join *Torchwood's* leading lady on her hen do in a nightclub.

NICK: Ah, wild Friday nights in Cardiff. I remember them well.

WILL: Sometimes it's hard to believe this exists in the same universe as *Doctor Who*.

RICH: It's a TV trope, people you never see again

introduced at a stag.

The morning after the night before and Gwen has gained a Nostrovite baby bump from an alien attack.

RICH: Charlotte, you're the

only one with experience of this, would Gwen know something was up before looking in the mirror?

CHARLOTTE: I would argue quite likely.

WILL: But how did she get pregnant from a bite?

JORDAN: Not every alien has their genitals in the same place.

NICK: Does Ianto still have that shrine in Cardiff Bay?

WILL: He does. It makes me ashamed of fandom.

RICH: Death threats courtesy of...

NICK: *Torchwood* always had these great *Pobol Y Cwm* argument scenes.

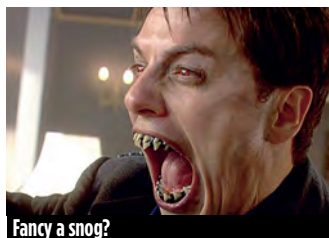
JORDAN: And by great you mean embarrassing?

Finally, it's the day of the wedding.

JORDAN: They're all very calm considering it's the morning of their wedding. ➔



Now that was a wild night out.



Fancy a snog?

NICK: Nerys Hughes there. Legend.
CHARLOTTE: Half Man Half Biscuit would beg to differ...

JORDAN: Is Rhys wearing a suit jacket with a rugby shirt?

RICH: Classy guy.

JORDAN: Isn't this the same building from "The Wedding Of Sarah Jane Smith"?

Tosh walks in with a box.

CHARLOTTE: If it's a severed head in that box I'm going to be upset.

WILL: Unless it's the head of Ianto, in which case, make a shrine!

JORDAN: Do I smell an anti-Ianto agenda?

NICK: Now there's an ominous piano tinkle.

JORDAN: It's almost like one of them's not going to make it to the next season...

"Do they pick actors based on how thick their accents are?"

NICK: This episode is fighting really hard to get a mainstream audience.

RICH: The rest of the series wasn't, the rest of the series was good.

The Nostrovite is feeling peckish and decides to seduce one of the guests in a bedroom.

WILL: Is this TV's first alien blowjob?

JORDAN: It's suddenly turned into *Species*.

RICH: And that's a bad thing?

JORDAN: Do they pick supporting actors for this show based on how thick their Welsh accents are?

WILL: I'd give anything for a Cyberwoman to walk in right now. Brighten things up.

RICH: It'd be great if everyone from the series had been invited to this wedding.

NICK: Pterodactyl wearing a tuxedo!

CHARLOTTE: Dabbing his eyes with a handkerchief.

JORDAN: There are hardly any people there. Think they're over-doing it with the venue?

The big moment, any objections?

JORDAN: Er, yeah, she's got a space lizard inside her!

Jack interrupts the ceremony in the nick of time.

CHARLOTTE: Oh Jack, had to make a big entrance didn't you? Couldn't discreetly cough.

RICH: At least he didn't sing.

JORDAN: I don't care about any of the side characters in this episode.

RICH: It's not the best, but it works as a calm before the storm episode.

NICK: It's more the tedium before the storm.

WILL: I think this is worse than "Cyberwoman".

Torchwood has discovered the Nostrovite has shapeshifted into Rhys's mum and are giving chase.

WILL: I love how no one's phased by Jack running about with a gun.

JORDAN: Jack, you know she's a shapeshifter who looks identical to Rhys's mum, and you still call her an ugly bitch?

RICH: Where else can we see Nerys Hughes get gunned down through some flowers by a pregnant woman in a wedding dress?

CHARLOTTE: You can't run that fast when you're pregnant.

WILL: So the plot is basically resolved by Jack shooting the thing with a big gun?

RICH: That's why *Torchwood* is so terrifying, because it's a world without *Doctor Who*.

NICK: No TV show couldn't be improved by a blue TARDIS materialising in the corner... *The Wire*, *Great British Bake-Off*, *Babestation*...

WILL: Jabestation!

JORDAN: Can you hear the sound of a thousand fan fiction writers combusting?

ELEANOR: *starts chewing on toy bricks*

CHARLOTTE: Uh-oh, Eleanor's not impressed.



One-night stands are bad, m'kay?



"He seems to have invented some kind of sonic screwdriver."

Space: 1999 "Alpha Child" (1975)



In our next baby-themed slice of sci-fi the first child is born on Alpha in *Space: 1999*.

NICK: What's it all about, Alpha Child?

RICH: They should have called this show *Beige: 1999*.

JORDAN: I can't believe the man who made *Thunderbirds* made this...

WILL: ...Only the actors are more wooden.

NICK: And apparently a cosmic phenomenon has bleached all colour out of the moon.

RICH: They brought the two stars of *Mission Impossible*, husband and wife, in as a package. Most expensive package on British TV.

NICK: And the most boring. You compare it to *Doctor Who* and this doesn't have a tenth of the wit and imagination.

Within hours, the Alpha Baby has aged five years.

WILL: Blimey, he's not a baby for very long.

JORDAN: So the message of this is don't have sex in space?

NICK: This was our first experience of the celestial force known as tedium.

RICH: We were happy then, before the tedium came.

CHARLOTTE: This is "space Damien" isn't it?

NICK: It could be *Space: 666*.

RICH: It would be great if this alien child was just like "I hate you! I'm not coming out of my room!"

WILL: This was our answer to *Star Trek*. That's dispiriting.

JORDAN: This is like *Star Trek* with all the fun taken out.



"Please tell me I look manly in this."

WILL: Still better than *Voyager* though.

A surprisingly glittery invading alien force arrives to reclaim their child.

JORDAN: We bring colour, Earthmen.

NICK: That's very *Star Trek*, the spaceship appearing on the scanner screen.

WILL: The Eagle, that's a classic design.

RICH: The Blockade Runner was originally going to be the Millennium Falcon in *Star Wars*, but they decided it looked too much like the Eagle One.

CHARLOTTE: The most startling thing in this is that all their TV monitors are black and white.

JORDAN: Guy on the right with an enormous moustache. His style hasn't dated at all.

NICK: *Porn: 1999*.

WILL: This is quite upsetting; they've exposed this kid to terminal levels of boredom.

Having indulged in tangents for the last ten minutes, the child growing into Julian Glover recaptures the Couch crew's attention.

JORDAN: He's like a wannabe Zod. Interesting costume though, like some kind of fetish mummy.

NICK: It's a motif of Gerry Anderson's that they shoot first, ask questions later.

RICH: If they hadn't shot first in *Captain Scarlet* the Mysterons would never have invaded.

NICK: When you compare how exciting something like *Stingray* is, this at least needs a decent theme: "Moooooonbase, Moonbase..."

JORDAN: Moral of this story: they grow up fast. Or: don't trust a baby.

In the closing scenes we enter a room to find a man dying in bed.

NICK: Someone's read the next script.

ELEANOR: *gurgles*

CHARLOTTE: I think that means two stars.



Never trust a monkey with a clipboard.



"Maybe a couple of Rennies will solve it?"

Junior (1994)



The movie in which Arnie gets pregnant. Family-friendly comedy or nightmare-vision of the future, you decide...

RICH: So was this Arnie's last film before the bubble burst?

JORDAN: Yep, the *Eraser/Jingle All The Way/Batman & Robin* triple whammy in '96/'97 did him in.

WILL: Arnie is the least convincing screen scientist ever.

JORDAN: No, that's Christmas Jones.

NICK: Christmas only comes once a year...

JORDAN: No scientist has that physique. Or that accent.

RICH: I'm going to wager Frank Langella is slightly evil in this film.

NICK: This film has the look of mid-'90s cinema: over-lit, harmless cinematography.

JORDAN: There are few things more soul destroying than a comedy that isn't funny.

RICH: Maybe it's some avant-garde film genre - anti-comedy.

JORDAN: Arnie, you can't wear glasses like that.

WILL: They are the glasses of a twat.

RICH: Is that monkey in Arnie's lab his baby?

NICK: Probably Caesar plotting the destruction of mankind.

Arnie's been experimenting on himself and experiences a childbirth nightmare.

NICK: This is not going to end well. Nothing that involves surgical gloves ends well.

JORDAN: Arnie's dream baby is the most horrifying thing I've ever seen.

CHARLOTTE: The moral of this story is: Arnie should never be allowed to have a baby.

RICH: For a film all about new life, there's no life whatsoever in this.

WILL: *Space: 1999* was funnier.

JORDAN: Watching Eleanor stare down a stuffed pig is more entertaining than watching Arnie and Danny DeVito interact. **Arnie's running round disguised as a woman now and on cue, Frank Langella does something evil...**

RICH: I told you he'd turn out to be bad!

JORDAN: Arnie pushing Frank Langella over was the action scene. Wasn't even a one-liner.

RICH: That's what it's missing, the one-liners!

CHARLOTTE: Arnie's a more convincing pregnant runner than Eve Myles though.

NICK: *The Last Contraction Hero*.

WILL: Arnie in drag makes Mrs Brown look like Cindy Crawford.

CHARLOTTE: Why is he having contractions if he doesn't have any of the muscles?

WILL: Is it possible to want a film to die?

JORDAN: Drive off the cliff, that would be funny.

RICH: "Success, we have managed to extract all the humour from a film!"

WILL: I'm trying to think what the actual point of men having babies is. There is no point.

Arnie is rushed to hospital to give birth.

RICH: I think medical professionals would be much calmer than that. Not running around like their pants are on fire.

WILL: It's not like he's going to squeeze it out of his cock.

NICK: That's the twist ending.

JORDAN: This film tackles the same themes as *Alien*, but in a much more stupid way.

WILL: Arnie's ridiculous cry of pain there was the only bit I laughed at in this entire film.

RICH: Ah, DeVito having a baby is the sequel.

ELEANOR: *bashes her toys together*

CHARLOTTE: I think that means: Nooooooooooooo!



The ultimate in uterus-envy.



Say what you like, that hair is great.



"Ludo... friend." We love these guys.

Labyrinth (1986)



The last film of the evening before Eleanor's done for the night, Jim Henson's

Muppet classic, which opens with Jennifer Connelly running round a park dressed like a princess.

CHARLOTTE: I used to run round in a park like that.

WILL: You were a teenage cosplayer?

NICK: What is it about this film and girls of a certain generation?

CHARLOTTE: It gets you at the beginning. Sarah feels down and put upon, and then David Bowie turns up in a cod-piece and all's right with the world.

RICH: This room is quite cool when you re-watch, because a lot of it foreshadows what's to come.

JORDAN: She's massively over-reacting, it doesn't seem *that* bad in her house. Try living in Nazi Germany, see how you like that.

WILL: She's a bit of a dick. She blames the baby and the baby's done nothing!

Goblin King Jareth suddenly appears in baby Toby's room.

NICK (BOWIE SUPERFAN): Oh dear god, Wiggy Stardust.

JORDAN: Why does he look so different from the other goblins? Different species?

CHARLOTTE: Where's David Bowie gone? I want him to come back.

And just like that, it's time for the Magic Dance.

RICH: Throw a baby in the air, like you just don't care.

Back in the Labyrinth Sarah encounters the fire demons.

RICH: It's the little things that make this come alive. This would look hideous in CGI.



Great babygro. And Brian Froud's son, too.

CHARLOTTE: Gates McFadden did the choreography and Danny John-Jules is one of the fire demons. Top trivia.

Sarah escapes, but must next traverse the Bog of Eternal Stench.

WILL: The Bog of Eternal Stench, one drop and you'll smell bad forever, this is a great idea.

JORDAN: Still not as bad as dog poo.

NICK: If she was babysitting do you think she could charge a bit extra for all this?

The ballroom scene provides endless inspiration for dirty jokes.

WILL: The prince's balls are getting bigger every year.

"Bowie looks like a member of Mötley Crüe or some '80s poodle rocker"

RICH: You're breaking my ball here!

WILL: This is like *Eyes Wide Shut* meets *Fraggle Rock*.

NICK: Bowie just looks like a member of Mötley Crüe or some other '80s LA poodle rocker. It's not a good look for the coolest man on the planet.

JORDAN: You have to wonder how the goblins maintained a reasonable system of government.

Sarah's nearly at the top of Jareth's castle, but he's tormenting her in a room that defies the laws of gravity.

WILL: You'd have a bugger of a time fitting a light in there.

RICH: Imagine the poor cleaner.

CHARLOTTE: I wish the owl had released an album.

JORDAN: Imagine if this film had ended by revealing Sarah had gone insane, the camera pans out and she's just had electro shock therapy, like at the end of *Brazil*. Dark.

ELEANOR: *asleep*

CHARLOTTE: That's the best reaction yet! **SFX**



Luke Newberry begins his journey to the other side...



Emily Bevan didn't take the job to look super glamorous.



SCARE

In the Community

The undead are taking medication and returning to their old lives in BBC Three's *In The Flesh*.

Ian Berriman went on set

On a wet December afternoon in Salford, the dead are coming back to life... in a pie factory!? Okay: truth be told, it's not a pie factory any more, but a former industrial space that's now a studio at MediaCity, home to *In The Flesh*, a new three-part zombie drama for BBC Three.

Your *SFX* correspondent is on set to watch a flashback to the night when the undead first rose from their coffins. Location work has already taken place; now a section of graveyard has been recreated in the studio, in a room lined with black cloth. A rectangle of turf is raised five feet off the ground on metal legs: it looks for all the world as if someone's decided to splice table tennis with a game of park football. Behind it, the church in the background is just a silhouette on wheels. A few final adjustments are made: the dry ice is cranked up, the turf gets a quick spritz of water, and someone yells "Can you move the church to the right about six feet?" As we wait for a take, one of the crew hums Michael Jackson's "Thriller".

Holes in the platform allow two of the lead zombies, Kieren (Luke Newberry) and Amy (Emily Bevan) to sit beneath it, then emerge from the earth. Kieren gazes around with a look of incomprehension. In the background, Amy slowly drags herself out of her grave, resplendent in the '50s-style dress and fingerless gloves she was buried in. Between them, an undead old lady in slippers staggers across the stage. Amusingly, it transpires that this extra's day job is in undertaking: "I'm doing two funerals tomorrow!"

In The Flesh is the brain-child of Dominic Mitchell, who penned the pilot while on Northern

Voices, a BBC Writers' Room scheme mentored by *Torchwood* writer John Fay. It's a dream project for the first-time TV writer, who loves George Romero's classic *Dead* movies, and identifies Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* as the book that first got him hooked on reading.

"I'm a massive horror fan," Mitchell enthuses. "That's my go-to thing; if it's a costume drama or a horror I will go for horror every time – and twice on Sundays!"

However, steeped though he may in the scary stuff, Mitchell was determined to make *In The Flesh* a very different take on the undead.

"It's what would happen if there was a zombie apocalypse," he explains. "They treat it like an illness – it's called Partially Deceased Syndrome, and the zombies take medication. They're just like someone who's had a psychotic episode. I wanted to ground it, as much as possible. We wanted it to be a realistic *Kes/This Is England* kind of drama that just happened to be about zombies – for it to have that kitchen sink, Ken Loach feel to it, but with a little bit of genre thrown in."

George Romero's original trilogy of zombie movies are renowned for the way they metaphorically tackled issues like consumerism and race. *In The Flesh* strives to do the same, as Luke Newberry tells us (once he's brushed the peat off his shoulders...)

"It's so multi-faceted, and so engaging", Newberry says. "The fact that we're zombies – or PDS sufferers – is one small element of the whole thing. Family is at the core of it: how families are by nature dysfunctional and have many problems to overcome. Instead of thousands of zombies →

running around with people shooting them, it's, 'What if this happened to a family?' Then it also covers the whole thing of society and acceptance and people being closed-minded and stuck in their ways. I think it'll speak to different people in different ways."

AFTER THE EVENT

The series is set four years after an event known as The Rising. Since then, the threat of brain-munching zombies (referred to as "Rabids") has been contained and controlled, thanks to a drug called Neurotriptyline, daily injections of which free PDS sufferers of their hunger for brains and return their intelligence, memories, and ability to communicate. By popping in contacts and applying a flesh-coloured mousse to their faces, they can make themselves look like the living – well, from a distance, anyhow. Now they're being released from rehab centres and returning to civilian life – in Luke's case, a tightly-knit village called Roarton. Understandably, not everyone is delighted...

"This small community is very religious", Mitchell explains. "And there's this

Brains Explained

In The Flesh's writer has a theory on zombies' favourite food

Zombies haven't always munched on brains – in George Romero's *Night Of The Living Dead* they ate flesh alright, but not grey matter. It was 1985's *The Return Of The Living Dead*, with its undead who cry for "More brains!", that popularised that bit of mythology. Keen to ground *In The Flesh* in reality, writer Dominic Mitchell has come up with a scientific basis for that ravening hunger.

"I was watching all the zombie movies going, 'Why do they need brains?'," says Mitchell, "so I suppose because they're in a reanimated state they can't produce new cells. There's a substance called glial cells in our brains – it's vital for proper brain function, and you'll die if you don't have it. I decided *that's* why they eat brains.

"Neurotriptyline makes these glial cells artificially in the brain. For a long time they thought that once you've got brain damage that's it, but now they're finding that they actually make new brain cells. So I was like, 'Oh well, that's what the Neurotriptyline does as well'. That's why when they start being treated with it they start coming back to themselves."

firebrand vicar, Vicar Oddie [played by Kenneth Cranham]. He believes that they're demons, they're the White Horsemen from *The Book Of Revelation*, they're evil, and they must be judged. He controls the parish council, and obviously has a lot of influence."

Also not about to welcome home Kieren and his kind with open arms are Roarton's Human Volunteer Force (led by Bill Macy, played by Steve Evets) who defended the community against the undead during the initial outbreak, and so have particular reason to be suspicious.

"There's no guarantees with medication that it's going to do its job for 20 or 30 years," Mitchell notes, "and of course they're immortal, so it'll be going on forever. What if they come off the medication? What if they become tolerant to it? So the HVF are right to be fearful. There's no simple good guys and bad guys; they've all got their own ideas."

Further complicating matters, Kieren's own sister, 18-year-old Jem (played by Harriet Cains) is a member of the HVF, and – initially

"She's really ballsy, and she's really grasping her second life with everything that she's got"



These days it's all about going for the brains...



Amy (Emily Bevan): a girl in a mess.



A mere two members of the Human Volunteer Force.



Behind bars and a police line.



People with torches:
always something
you can depend on.



at least – refuses to have anything to do with him. Awkward!

“When her mum and dad try and get her to go pick him up from the PDS centre, she’s not having any of it,” Cains explains. “Her dad is in denial about the whole situation and acts as if nothing’s happened. Her mum is just trying to keep her family together, and it’s not really working out that well. Jem’s the only one who will turn around and say, ‘What a mess.’ Her journey through the three episodes is coming to terms with the fact that it’s not necessary to cull them all any more. And also it’s about forgiving her brother for leaving her.”

ACCEPT YOURSELF

In the meantime, there is someone Kieren can turn to for support: kooky Lancastrian lass Amy Dyer, a fellow PDS sufferer who encourages him to learn to accept himself. If *In The Flesh* was a Hollywood movie she’d probably be played by someone like Zooey Deschanel; here the role’s taken by Emily Bevan.

“It’s like people who’ve been in therapy or rehab together: regardless of their personalities they have this core understanding that they’ve got this vulnerability that they both share,” Bevan explains. “She’s really ballsy, and she’s really grasping her second life with everything that she’s got. Whenever she comes into a scene where there’s lots of people, it’s like the moment in a Western where everyone stops playing the piano and looks up at you as the doors swing! And she doesn’t cower away from it. She’s just like, ‘What’s your problem?’”

“She takes everything on the chin,” Luke Newberry adds. “She’s like, ‘Everything’s fine!’, she doesn’t really care, and Kieren’s just the opposite of that! He’s like, ‘How can you be so happy?’ And she shows him that you can, and gives him a bit of hope.”

Indeed, in a community where many people are in deep denial about what has gone on, the irony is that a character like Amy is arguably more “alive” than many of the living.

“That’s what’s weird about it,” says Harriet Cains, “Because there’s such real emotion coming from dead things. It’s a bit Tim Burton-esque that, like the *Corpse Bride* – the dead have got more life in them! Whereas everyone who lived through *The Rising* – apart from the HVF – has learned to block it out and repress it.”

If all this sounds rather angst-ridden and depressing, fear not. While *In The Flesh* is definitely not in the vein of *Shaun Of The Dead*, there are moments of humour arising naturally from the absurdity of certain situations.

“Hopefully it’s got a lot of comedy in it,” Dominic Mitchell says. “But that’s more to do with what comes out of characters rather than winking at the camera.”

For example, an everyday family meal becomes slightly surreal when one of the people at the dinner table is undead...

“Kieren’s parents can’t deal with the fact that he doesn’t eat food any more. They really want him to be their normal son,” Mitchell says, “but of course zombies can’t eat. So they kinda go, ‘Could you fake it?’ So you’ve got this ridiculous scene where they’re all sat in the kitchen and he’s pretending to eat!”

“Terrible things happen when they eat!” adds Emily Bevan. “As I say in one scene, ‘I tried eating a Mars bar yesterday... had to throw away me knickers, and me skirt!’ So that’s a warning to all zombies!”

And if the series is a success, can we expect further episodes of *In The Flesh* in the future? Well, Dominic Mitchell has created an extensive series bible detailing this world, and would clearly love to write them.

“I always imagined bigger stories,” he enthuses. “What happens after a year? Are they going to be able to get jobs? Are they going to get passports? It’s all very well putting them out into the community, but what then? I’ve got loads of tangents that I could go off on, and it would be fantastic to explore that. I can see it going on forever!” **SFX**

In The Flesh comes to BBC Three in March.

FIRST READ

AN EXTRACT FROM A NEW BOOK

SEAL TEAM 666

by Weston Ochse

The X-Files meets Tom Clancy in this supernatural military thriller from award-winning horror author, Weston Ochse.



THE AUTHOR

Weston Ochse is the author of nine novels. His first novel, *Scarecrow Gods*, won the Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in First Novel. He's also had more than a hundred short stories published, many of which have appeared in anthologies, magazines and comic books. His short fiction has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. He lives in the Arizona desert with his wife and fellow author, Yvonne Navarro. His last name is pronounced "oaks." Together with his first name, it sounds like a stately trailer park.

Battling demons, possessed humans, mass-murdering cults and evil in its most dark and ancient form, Navy SEAL Team 666 has their work cut out for them...

EARLY MORNING. PAKISTAN. MAY 2, 2011.

DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME was stenciled on the side of the first of two Blackhawk helicopters assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, aka Night Stalkers. They were en route from Jalalabad Air Base in Afghanistan to the sleepy residential section of Abbottabad, Pakistan, where a million-dollar compound rested a mere eight hundred meters from Kakul military academy, one of Pakistan's premiere army officer training schools.

SEAL Team 666 rode in the first helicopter. Comprising only five men and a dog, they were different in form and function from all other special-operations units. They wore black camouflage fatigues with dark gray Rhodesian combat vests. On their heads were Protec skate helmets modified for multiband inter/intra team radio (MBITR) headsets and microphones. Atop each helmet was a mount that held a pair of night-vision goggles (NVG). All but one of the SEALs wore gray ballistic face masks. Designed to protect the wearer from 9mm and shotgun hits, the masks produced a likeness similar to a hockey goalie's.

On board the second helicopter, eleven members of SEAL Team 6 were ready to provide backup if necessary. Dressed similarly to the SEAL team in the first helicopter, none of them wore face masks and they did not have a dog.

"Five minutes," the pilot announced over the radio system. The crew chief and his gunner prepared the doors and checked the M60 machine guns they could employ if necessary.

SEAL Team 666 heard the announcement through the MBITR and performed a last-minute weapons check. All five SEALs carried SIG Sauer 9mm automatic pistols. In addition to the 9s, two SEALs carried Heckler & Koch (HK) MP5s, two SEALs carried M4 Super 90 semiautomatic 12-gauge shotguns, and the fifth SEAL carried a Stoner SR-25 sniper rifle.

The dog was a Belgian Malinois and lay panting at the feet

of the sniper, her mouth open in what could be considered the canine equivalent of an anticipatory grin. She wore a canine tactical assault vest. Spare ammo clips were tucked into compartments, as was a first-aid kit. The word HOOVER was stitched across the back of the vest.

SEALs lowered the NVGs into place, turned them on, and watched the world transform into a realm of phantom green. They postured, ready to deploy through the side doors. The dog stood, prepared to leave last.

The Blackhawk's doors opened, letting in the cool Pakistani mountain air. The triangular compound came into sight in the SEALs' green-tinged vision. The Blackhawk was coming in fast, just beginning to flare. But as the helicopter passed over and started to land, the green vision flashed white and all systems blacked out.

"Hold on," shouted the pilot. "We're going down."

"Force field," grunted one of the SEALs. "Does it every time."

The SEALs held on to the static bars affixed to the ceiling and ripped their NVGs free, now useless since the force field had fried the electronics.

The pilot managed to autorotate the Blackhawk to a clear piece of ground outside the twelve-foot wall skirting the compound. The other helicopter landed nearby, steering clear of what took down the lead chopper.

One member of SEAL Team 666 vaulted out of the Blackhawk and placed a shape charge on the wall. He stepped aside while a man-sized hole blew through it with a dull *whump*. Then the two SEALs with the HKs deployed into the breach, weapons sunk deep into their shoulders, barrels leading the way. The SEALs with the shotguns came next, followed by the sniper and the dog.

The sniper set up in a corner of the yard where he had a field of fire that included the main entrance to the compound, the front door, and windows on all three floors. Outside the wall, SEAL Team 6 would ensure that no one got in, especially if anyone was planning on coming to the rescue of those they were about to kill. Ultimately, it was up to the sniper to ensure that no one got out. Hoover waited with him until the others gave the all-clear.

The other four slammed through the front door, pouring through in a routine that had been drilled into them so many times it had become second nature. Every corner of the entry room was controlled by the four SEALs and their weapons. When a bleary-eyed guard stepped into the room from a

hallway, a 12-gauge slug disintegrated his face. The sound of the explosion in the tight quarters was stunning, but a thousand hours of close-quarters battle (CQB) training enabled the SEALs to ignore it.

With the communications gear fried as well, they had to resort to hand signals. The fact that the gear no longer worked meant two things, however. One, it meant that the monitoring from the White House Situation Room, Coronado, Dam Neck, and a dozen other places could no longer be conducted, meaning any chance of a flag officer or politician trying to use a ten-thousand-mile screwdriver to fix something they didn't like was impossible. And two, it meant that their target was most likely here, unless someone else had the capability of constructing a force field large enough to make a platoon's worth of twenty-first-century electronics worthless.

One of the SEALs made a hand motion to the sniper and Hoover. The sniper returned the gesture and spoke a few words. The dog shot across the ground until she was inside and with the SEALs.

They cleared the first floor, shot three more guards, and cut the power and telephone lines.

The two SEALs with the MP5s stacked up the stairs. They paused at the landing between the first and second floors. A hand signal to the others indicated there was a door at the top. After ensuring the stairs weren't booby-trapped, the lead SEAL gestured for Hoover to check out the door. The dog padded silently up the stairs and sniffed at the space between the bottom of the door and the floor. It didn't take long for the dog to turn rigid, then glance worriedly at the SEAL beside her.

The SEAL gave a hand signal to the others. The other SEALs responded immediately, pressing themselves against the walls as they waited for the door to open. Then the SEAL gave another signal to the dog. They were now hair-trigger ready.

The SEAL posted nearest the door pointed his Super 90 toward the spot where the locking mechanism met the doorframe, then pulled the trigger three times. Amid the explosion of sound, light, and wooden splinters, he shoved the door open and flattened himself against the stairs.

The door opened into a hallway, where three men and something dark had been waiting. The men hesitated, still stunned by the explosion. The lead SEAL double-tapped all three, putting two in each chest. They didn't have a chance, and as they sank to the floor, he could almost see the disappointment in their eyes.

But the thing behind them showed no sign of being stunned. It stepped forward. Glowing eyes. Taloned hands. Dark skin stretched tightly over elongated bones.

Demon.

The next SEAL in line emptied his MP5 into the creature. But it wasn't enough. The demon roared as it advanced. Pieces of its face had been blown away, revealing old black and brown pitted bone. An eye had disappeared in a burst of dust along with a batlike pointed ear. But even as the lead SEAL watched, the face began to re-form. First the cheek, then the eye, and soon the rest would be as it had been.

The SEAL who'd breached the door dropped to his knees and emptied his shotgun in the direction of the creature's legs.

The other two SEALs ran forward. The other MP5 opened up, sending fifteen 9mm rounds into the thing's face. The Super 90 unleashed seven 12-gauge shotgun slugs toward its knees.

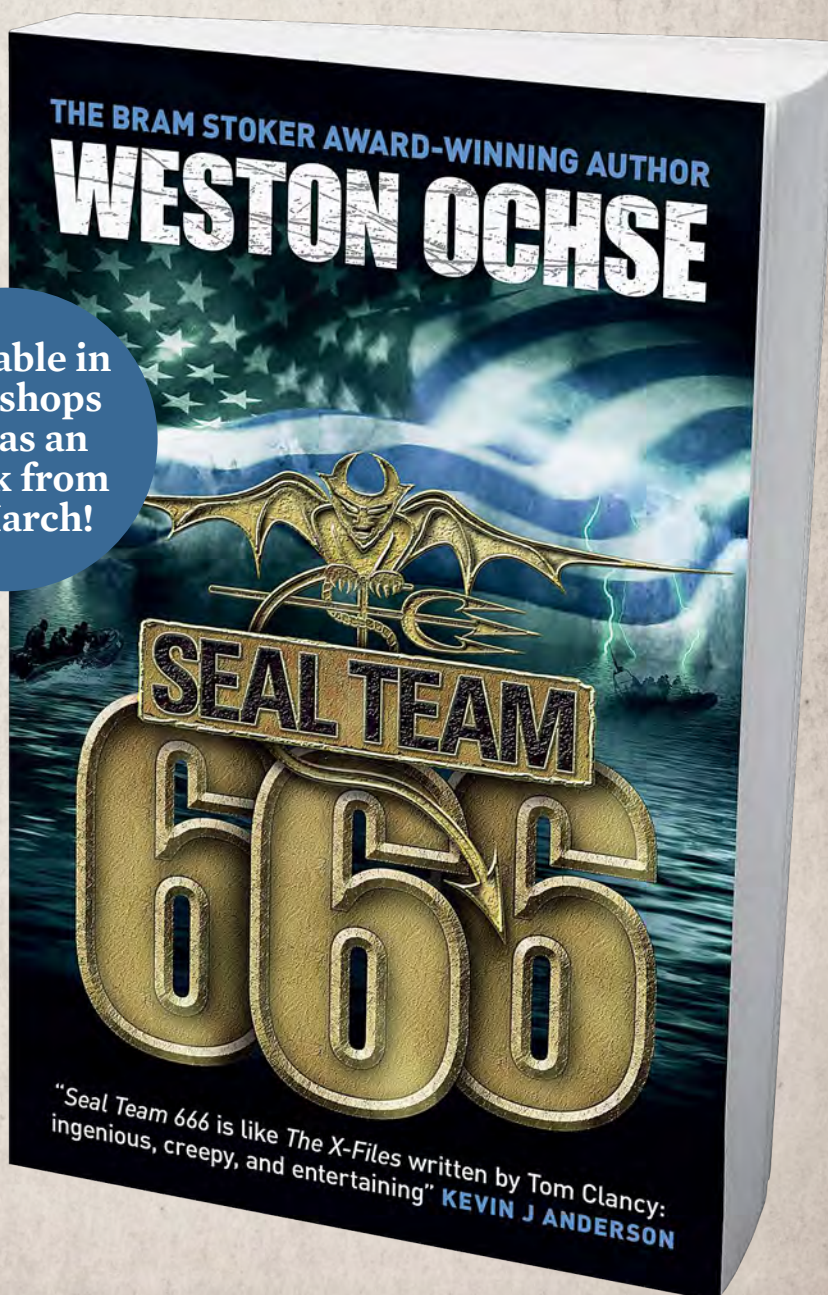
This combination was immediately duplicated by the first two SEALs, who'd had a moment to reload.

Under the combined damage of fourteen shotgun slugs and thirty 9mm rounds, the demon had no choice but to fall to its back as its soulless body fought to re-form.

Hoover knew what to do. She launched forward, landing on the demon's chest. Digging herself in place with the claws of her back feet, she opened her mouth wide, then snapped it shut on the demon's throat.

Pick up SEAL Team 666 by Weston Ochse, available 15 March from Titan Books, to find out what happens next. The sequel, SEAL Team 666: Age Of Blood will be published in October 2013 (RRP £7.99). Ebooks also available. www.titanbooks.com

Available in
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and as an
ebook from
15 March!





TREES COMPANY

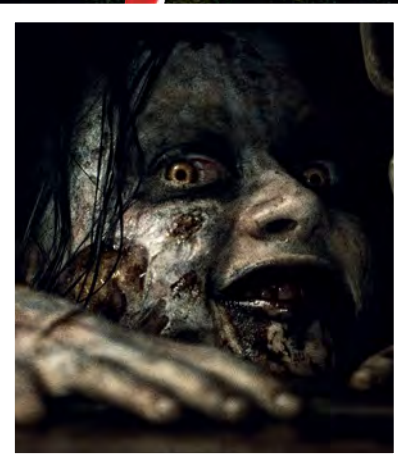
You can't keep the **Evil Dead** down. Tara Bennett dares to explore the new remake...

HORROR FANS HAVE EXISTED in a world without any fresh, bloody mayhem unleashed by the Book of the Dead for 20 years now. Yes, 1992's *Army Of Darkness* was the last time the creative team of Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert and Bruce Campbell punched the horror genre in the face with their completely bonkers *Evil Dead* trilogy. They promised to return with a new installment for the entirety of those two decades but it took a brand new collaborator to get *Evil Dead* scaring the stuffing out of audiences anew.

With piles of other projects from *Spider-Man* to *Spartacus* splintering their collective focus, Bruce Campbell, producer and possessor of the chin that made Ash Williams so iconic, tells *SFX* that the team started to take pitches from outside filmmakers for ideas on how to resuscitate the franchise. One of those meetings was with Uruguayan filmmaker Fede Alvarez (*Panic Attack!*).

Alvarez tells *SFX* that he saw *The Evil Dead* for the first time as a 12-year-old and was both horrified and besotted at the same time. "It was my favourite horror movie as a kid, but I had nightmares for a long time," Alvarez laughs lightly. "You're not supposed to see that movie at 12."

Initially reluctant to touch the sacred cow of *Evil Dead*, Alvarez says he felt differently after seriously mulling how to recapture the spirit of what made the original *Evil Dead* so scary. "When you think about remaking it, if you really know the movie you don't have to go and rewatch it. I hadn't seen it for the last 10 years but I knew exactly what it was, the ➔



Nothing some good moisturiser couldn't fix.



"IT WAS LIKE GOING TO WAR!"

Jane Levy plays Mia – the new Ash!

► What's Mia's story?

I go to a cabin in the woods to kick a habit, an addiction really, for heroin, and I bring all the people that are closest to me to help me do it. We discover the Book of the Dead and then it becomes a story about survival.

► What's your personal history with the *Evil Dead* film franchise?

I had never seen the movie when I got the script. I had never seen the movie when I auditioned. I only watched the movie after I had already gotten the role. I really liked it. I didn't think it was funny. I thought it was really scary. I don't really know why anyone else thought it was funny.

► Bruce says you really were a trooper despite getting your ass handed to you daily. What happened?

This is the hardest thing I have ever done. I got really sick. There was a lot of blood in this movie and the fake blood got stuck in my ear and I got a terrible ear infection. It was so painful I couldn't hear. And then it was winter and I was always wet; I'm wet for 90% of the movie. It was just emotionally, physically exhausting. It was like going to war.

horror I experienced back then, because all the things were pretty visceral. You always remember the scenes that scared the hell out of you. As a filmmaker and as a screenwriter, I asked 'Why did that scare me and why was *The Evil Dead* more horrific for me than other movies?' I know exactly the ideas in that movie that made it great for me. It was the violence; the horror of the graphic violence. It was so great. But there's also the idea that you go to a place with your best friends and suddenly they all try to kill you. It's not people like zombies. It's your best friends and family! My pitch to [Raimi] was something very faithful to the spirit of the original. When they made it, they were trying to be brutal and scary. I think that's why they liked it."

NO LAUGHS THIS TIME

Campbell confirms that's exactly what made them say yes, along with Alvarez's concept of it being a reboot featuring a female lead (Jane Levy) and no comedy. There's still a cabin in the woods, but this time it's supposed to be the peaceful, isolated setting for a circle of friends staging an intervention for their heroin addicted pal (Levy). Unfortunately for them, the Book of the Dead is in the basement. Uh oh.

"Now Fede is the new sucker and we get to beat him up," cackles Campbell. "He pitched

a straight version and that's what he made. This movie is very adult. There's nothing childish, immature or MTVish about his style. He's directing it like he's a 40-year-old man, so what happens as a result is, stylistically, when the shit hits the fan, you start taking it much more seriously. You know, every horror movie has to make a decision – how scary are we? Are we scary? Are we scary-funny? Are we torture porn? Thankfully, there's not a frame of torture porn in this movie because I feel like, aside from being offensive, it's lazy filmmaking."

And after a 20-year wait, Alvarez had no intention of having his name on a lazy, half-assed *Evil Dead*. "We don't have any fake scares so you trust the movie," the director teases about his techniques to unnerve audiences. "You know when something is going to happen, something happens. Every scare will develop into a scene that is insane, or for something that will happen later. We didn't use any of those gimmicks and I think that's something horror needed. I remember like 10 years ago there were the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* movies and they went for the huge orchestra hitting you and nothing was really happening. They were abusing and abusing that, so people were like [sighs loudly], 'Okay! We got rid of all that.'"



We don't think she's really paying attention.

"WHEN I GO AND WATCH A HORROR MOVIE, I WANT TO BE TAKEN TO A PLACE THAT IS SCARY. THAT IS WHAT I DO WITH EVIL DEAD"

"Fear is very psychological, right?" Alvarez continues. "You have to be able to take people to the right place. If I try to scare you now, it's not going to happen. But if I take you to a dark room in the back... it's all about the foreplay. When I go and watch a horror movie, I want to be taken to a place that is scary. A dark place that I can't see around and they scare the shit out of me. That is what I do with *Evil Dead*. And I'm creating real characters. They have a story that is not related to the horror. In the first half of the movie, it's a real drama about these kids that hooks you right away and suddenly they find the Book and things happen to them. It's almost like you're waiting for one of them to say, 'Wait, have any of you seen the *Evil Dead* movies, because what is happening here is like that!'" he laughs. "But the camera-work is very raw and real so they are in the real world."

Campbell says that Levy is a big reason why the film feels so grounded and visceral. "Jane Levy is a tough little chick," he says with pride. He relays the litany of injuries and brutal filming scenarios she endured with genuine admiration and says he's happy to hand over the franchise mantle to her. "I hope she becomes the new Ash. I hope she gets considered with the same respect and admiration that idiot Ash does. People enjoy that character, but we didn't want to put some unnatural burden on some young actor to be the new Ash."

HARDCORE FILMMAKING

You can't help but wonder if a cabin in the woods set horror film can make an impact on the genre in a post *Cabin in the Woods* cinematic world. Surely it ripped apart the very tropes *Evil Dead* created two decades ago? Alvarez admits he watched the Whedon/Goddard film after shooting *Evil Dead* and he had the same concerns. "Of course I was worried it was going to be just like ours but it's a completely different movie," he says with genuine relief in his voice. "The things that happen to them don't have anything to do with what happens to [our characters]. The tone is different too. I think *The Cabin In The Woods* is more comedy/horror. But I am proud to say that our movie is kind of faithful to their mythology. They're saying a horror event happens because these people are throwing this shit at these [victims] because they need their blood for their gods. It kind of makes sense for our movie too, but believe me, it doesn't take anything away from us. I think that's why I love the movie because it's not like a scary movie that mocks it and makes it not scary any more. They didn't do that. They did a clever portrait that gives sense to horror movies."

Then there's the question of how to reach today's jaded horror fans, used to the extremes explored by *Saw* and *The Human Centipede*. The director laughs and says, "I'll tell you a funny story. I was reading this book when I was about to start this movie. It's a book of interviews with the masters of horror. I think John Carpenter was talking about horror in general and he was saying, 'Today audiences are so numb and exposed to everything so it's very hard to shock an audience. So a filmmaker has to find a way to create something new to scare this numb audience.' I checked and that interview was from '88," he smiles. "It's so bizarre! When I was reading it I didn't know. I thought it was from two years ago because it's exactly the same feeling today, so it just shows there's always more to do." **SFX**

Evil Dead is released 19 April by Studio Canal.



There's that book again...

5 SCARIEST MOMENTS FROM THE EVIL DEAD TRILOGY



1 THE TREE RAPE SCENE THE EVIL DEAD

Something you just can't un-see. Even Raimi now regrets including this scene where Cheryl gets attacked by an arboreal demon.



2 CHERYL'S ESCAPE FROM THE WOODS THE EVIL DEAD

One of Raimi's signature POV shots as we literally chase Cheryl through the dark woods towards the cabin.



3 ASH'S FINAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE DEMONS THE EVIL DEAD

Ash returns to the cabin and faces down every one of those demons to survive. Ten minutes of heart-pounding mayhem.



4 ASH IS BECKONED DOWNSTAIRS BY HENRIETTA EVIL DEAD 2

This whole scene drips with dread and, true to expectations, ends up playing out horrifically.



5 ASH VERSUS THE OLD HAG ARMY OF DARKNESS

The scares are few in this last film, but the pit harpy Deadite's appearance generates a genuine moment of terror.

PENNY DREADFUL



What's happening in the world of horror movies this month...



This issue I'm having a crisis of identity. With HMV and Blockbuster in administration I'm afraid Amazon and the internet big boys are going to start telling me what to watch.

Meanwhile, Sam Mendes has nicked my name for his new show! At least he thinks I'm psycho-sexy...

A BROWSER'S LAMENT



HMV's gone into administration with Blockbuster Video following closely behind. Not just bad for DVD sales, studios and the economy, this is a tragedy for browsers. When I was small, Blockbuster was like the local youth club (minus ping pong and Chipsticks), the horror aisle a sweet shop of vice offering Killer Klowns and Candyman, Death Dolls and Head Hunters. We didn't care about reviews or stars: cover was king. We'd inhale every inch – know the boxes by heart, invent our own stories, half the time scarier than the films themselves, and bond with a genre for life.

Duff horror with exciting box art isn't disappearing any time soon. But without physical spaces showcasing the best and worst on offer we could lose the chance to explore on our own. Watching a

film because Netflix or Amazon recommend it, or because it's on a top 100 list, something you've borrowed from a friend, heard about on Twitter, or even read about in some horror column – it's not *yours* in the same way as if you found it on your own. And as every great teacher will attest, a lesson learned for yourself is always worth more than just being told. Like children falling in love with reading in their first library, let us browse for hours and finally choose *Frankenfish* just because the box looks cool. We'll find our way to *Frankenstein* on our own.

TOWER SHOCK



Take my word for it, then, or don't: film of the month goes to *Citadel* (out now). The words "gritty" and "urban" are about as welcome as "teenagers" and "camping" on my DVD shelf but this is something different.



DREADFUL OLD MOVIES

From Beyond is out now on Blu-ray from Second Sight.

Stuart Gordon's follow-up to *Re-Animator* is a similarly icky, kinky, body horror, with a mad scientist, a parallel universe, some tasteful bondage and some tasteless gore. Look out for a good bit where a man's head splits in half to reveal a face full of tentacles, prompting star Jeffrey Combs to remark, "That will be quite enough of that."



John Dies At The End – and the rest's not much cop either.

On paper, a hoodie horror about a young man afraid to go out after youths attack him, it develops into a near-mythic quest where our young hero, aided by a disgraced priest and a child with magical powers, must rescue a baby girl from demons who've imprisoned her in a dark fortress. *Citadel* is *F* meets *The Fisher King*. It's the debut feature from Irish director Ciaran Foy, who was himself the victim of a motiveless attack at the age of 18 which left him, like *Citadel*'s Tommy (the brilliant Aneurin Barnard) suffering from agoraphobia. It's personal, and you can feel it. See this if you liked Philip Ridley's *Heartless*.

PENNY IS UNDERWHELMED AT THE END



Disappointment of the month goes to *John Dies At The End* (out 22 March).

Don Coscarelli's adap of David Wong's space-and-time-spanning existential comedy horror is a fun, gory, genre-jumping ride; part *Donnie Darko*, part *Dude, Where's My Car?*, it's a cult hit in the making... with all the baggage that comes with it. Namely, that to those who don't find it hilarious, wacky and exhilarating, it's smug, hollow and irritating. Coscarelli made the decent *Phantasm* series and *Bubba Ho-Tep*, and *John Dies* takes a harebrained story of two dudes (Chase Williamson, Rob Mayes) who find a portal to other dimensions via new drug Soy Sauce, and packs it with visual flair and relentless energy. It just isn't as edgy as it thinks it is. It's in the same school as *Detention* (mentioned a few issues back), but while *Detention* is the cool kid who's in a band and rides a motorbike, *John Dies* is the stoner who laughs at stuff that's only



Hugging a hoodie in *Citadel*.

funny if you're stoned and starts a lot of sentences with "wouldn't it be cool if..."

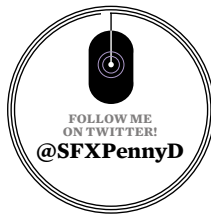
TRY YOUR LUCK

 Does your toast always land butter side up? Did you stay well when everyone else in the office got Norovirus? Then maybe you're preternaturally lucky, posits Juan Carlos Fresnadillo's excellent 2001 debut feature *Intacto* which I caught for the first time this month. While M Night Shyamalan's *Unbreakable* plays with the idea that some people are born invincible, *Intacto* imagines luck as a gift to be employed, exploited and trusted leading to the incredible sequence of six people charging blindfold through a dense wood believing only in their good fortune not to smash face-first into a tree. Fresnadillo went on to make zombie sequel *28 Weeks Later* and Clive Owen monster melodrama *Intruders*, but for my money *Intacto* is his freshest and most intense. More Spanish sizzles this month from [Rec] director Jaume Balagueró

with chilling and cruelly funny *Sleep Tight* – a standout at FrightFest – about an unshakably depressed janitor, driven to unspeakable acts by one incurably cheerful tenant. It's basically the same film as Hammer's *The Resident*, only much better.

NAME IN VAIN

 "Penny Dreadful is a psychosexual horror" sounds like a compliment to me... In fact it's a brand new series from Showtime Entertainment where Dracula, Frankenstein, Dorian Gray and friends congregate in Victorian London to "grapple with their monstrous alienation". A "Penny Dreadful" was of course cheap, lurid, serialised fiction (nothing like this column then) and even though this show sounds a bit like a lame *League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen* rip, it probably won't be – it's the hideous progeny of writer John Logan and director Sam Mendes, last seen making a billion with *Skyfall*. Makes me proud to be dreadful.



DREADFUL NIGHT IN

Once upon a time there was a movie called *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters*... urgh it's awful. This month's Night In celebrates mostly-not-terrible horror films spawned from fairytales

6.00pm

► Assemble sugar, spice and all things nice. Gather supply of breadcrumbs (in case you get lost on the way to the loo).

6.30pm

FREEWAY

Matthew Bright, 1996

► Underrated spin on *Red Riding Hood* with Reese Witherspoon as a teenage delinquent encountering sleazy murderous paedo Kiefer Sutherland on a trip to see her grandmother. Shocking, funny, stylish.

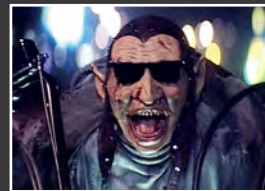


8.20pm

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Mark Jones, 1995

► Rumpel is trapped in an ornament in the 1400s; in '90s L.A. he's released by the tears of a widow. Expect bad one-liners and chasing about. Directed by the *Leprechaun* genius and not as good.



9.50pm

CINDERELLA

Man-dae Bong, 2006

► Lovely looking, slightly insipid Korean ghost story based loosely on bits of *Cinderella*, following girls obsessed with perfect beauty and plastic surgery, and a spirit who wants her face back.



11.35pm

THE GINGERDEAD MAN

Charles Band, 2005

► Gary Busey stars as a murderer who's executed, then resurrected as a giant vengeful biscuit, out to get the girl responsible for sending him down. Utterly, intentionally, pleasingly ridiculous.



12.45am

► Time to sleep for 100 years. Why's no one made a *Sleeping Beauty* horror? Because going to bed for 100 years'd be ace!

The award-winning videogame magazine. Now also available as an award-winning iPad app



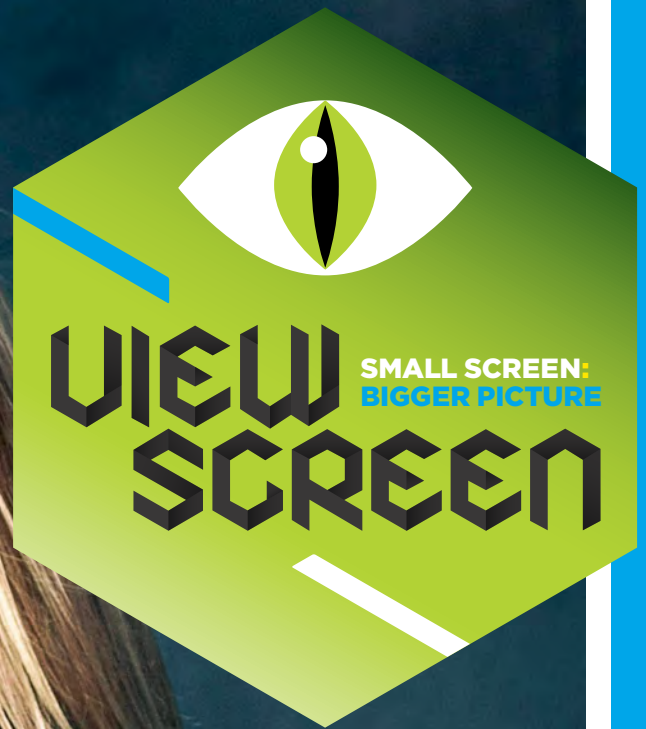
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Fringe

P98 Looks like they made it to the end

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BEING HUMAN
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YOUR TV LEAGUE

It's the championship table of this month's best TV episodes, based on your votes on our website!

- 1 AMERICAN HORROR STORY: ASYLUM**
2.10 "The Name Game"
(Your score 4.739)
- 2 HAVEN** 3.12 "Reunion"
(4.675)
- 3 FRINGE** 5.10
"Anomaly XB-6783746" (4.617)
- 4 FRINGE** 5.11
"The Boy Must Live" (4.606)
- 5 ARROW** 1.11
"Trust But Verify" (4.482)
- 6 BEING HUMAN** 5.01
"The Trinity" (4.478)
- 7 FRINGE** 5.12/13 "Liberty"/
"An Enemy Of Fate" (4.47)
- 8 PRIMEVAL: NEW WORLD** 1.06 "Clean Up On
Aisle Three" (4.417)
- 9 AMERICAN HORROR STORY: ASYLUM**
2.11 "Spilt Milk" (4.414)
- 10 BEING HUMAN**
5.02 "Sticks And Rope" (4.315)

THIS MONTH'S STINKER BEAUTY AND THE BEAST 1.01 "Pilot" (2.769)

Based on reader poll votes at the SFX website after the first UK airing. This month's eligible period was between Tuesday 1 January and Sunday 10 February 2013.

● Read up-to-date episode breakdowns and vote on them at www.sfx.co.uk/tv-review-index

This is what *Fringe* was all about: people.



BROADCAST FINISHED SHOWING ON SKY1 IN JANUARY

Power To The People

FRINGE: Why the key to the show's success was its characters

IN 100 EPISODES *FRINGE* GAVE US some of the barriest plotlines ever committed to television: human marionettes, LSD-fuelled animated blimp adventures, an entire season where a race of technologically advanced super-baldies have subjugated the earth's population... But even with all the madness on screen, the fact *Fringe* even made it to 100 episodes was its biggest surprise.

Consider the huge drop in ratings (from an average of over 10 million in 2009 to well under five by 2013), or the move to a notorious Friday Night Death Slot during season three, or the fact it aired on the Fox "we killed *Firefly*" network – any one of these should have been enough to cement its place in unfinished TV limbo, but somehow *Fringe* soldiered on. In doing so it became an all-too rare beast among modern sci-fi shows – one that wrapped up its story on its own terms.

Reaching 100 episodes is an important factor in American syndication deals (which is where another station buys or licenses a show) and DVD/iTunes sales were always strong enough to see the show lingering around bestselling charts for weeks. The way we consume TV is changing in a more significant way than ever

before. DVRs, online-streaming and digital downloads mean that live ratings aren't the all-important indicator they once were, but Fox doesn't have a track record of commissioning several multi-million dollar seasons off the back of potential profits rather than guaranteed ad revenue. Loss-leaders are still unusual. Sci-fi loss-leaders, even more so.

It's tempting to say that perhaps Fox learnt their lesson from the *Firefly* debacle (how else would you explain *Dollhouse*'s second season?), though this probably isn't the case. In many ways *Fringe* was Fox's jewel in crown, and they knew it. A show that was equal parts wildly inventive and emotionally engaging. A show with production values up the wazoo. For a fraction of the cost of a *Game Of Thrones* or a *Walking Dead*, Fox had one of the best looking, passionately acted, well written shows to have ever graced the airwaves.

FACT ATTACK!

- ▶ September's Notebook (as seen in episode 5.11) is a real thing you can buy with real money written by SFX's own Tara Bennett. See page 122.
- ▶ Showrunner JH Wyman and JJ Abrams are teaming up for another Fox show, a cop drama about LAPD officers partnered with androids.
- ▶ The *Fringe* finale aired simultaneously on Sky1 and Fox in America. Nice one, Sky!

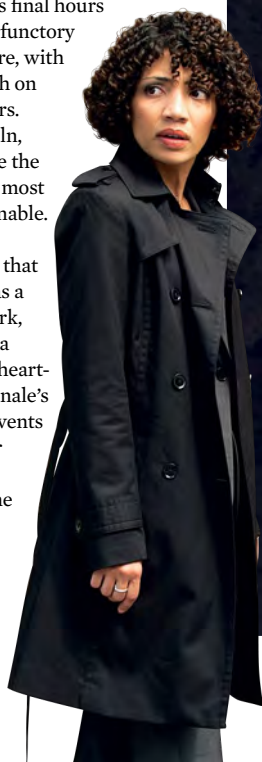


It may have started life as an above average *X-Files* clone, but in many ways *Fringe* ended life as the show *The X-Files* always wanted to be. Utterly out there week to week, with one of the most compelling, continually evolving arc plots ever conceived for the screen. But what *Fringe* never lost sight of was that the relationships between its characters was the blazing sun at the heart of its universe(s).

If this wasn't abundantly evident throughout, then the finale hammered the point home. In many ways *Fringe's* final hours demonstrated little more than perfunctory storytelling for a show of its calibre, with a plot low on shock twists and high on satisfying closure for the characters. Walter, Peter, Olivia, Astrid, Lincoln, Broyles, September and even Gene the cow's stories were resolved in the most emotionally rewarding way imaginable.

Fringe became so good at its character moments by season five that even in an episode where Peter has a teleporting slugfest with Windmark, the highlight was unquestionably a scene where he and Olivia have a heart-to-heart on a rooftop. For all the finale's time-bending, universe-altering events what *really* floored me was Walter telling Astrid she had a "beautiful name". *Fringe* might have spent the last few years of its life dodging cancellation, but it takes a special show to push the boundaries of ratings-driven television science.

Jordan Farley



MINDPROBE •

Paul Wesley

The Vampire Diaries' good guy just wants to be bad...

►What do you enjoy most about playing Stefan Salvatore?

I love to play the Ripper. It's my favourite thing. If it were up to me, you'd be seeing him the whole time, man. He'd just get his own spin-off and be the Ripper.

►Now that Elena is a vampire, who do you want her to choose – Damon or Stefan?

You know, I really don't care. Yeah, that's the truth. Because at the end of the day, if she chooses Stefan, something's gonna happen and then she's gonna go back to Damon. And if she chooses Damon, something's gonna happen and she's gonna go back to Stefan. So I don't really care who she chooses, because I feel like it's just gonna constantly rotate.

►How has Elena's vampirism affected Stefan's feelings for her?

I read this book on men and women, and the thing that attracts men to women is that we don't understand women. It's like a positive and a negative. Psychologically, if she's one of his own, maybe that's not as attractive to him. I don't know. But usually we're attracted to our opposites. But I'm not sure if *Vampire Diaries* goes that deep into the psychology of a relationship [laughs].

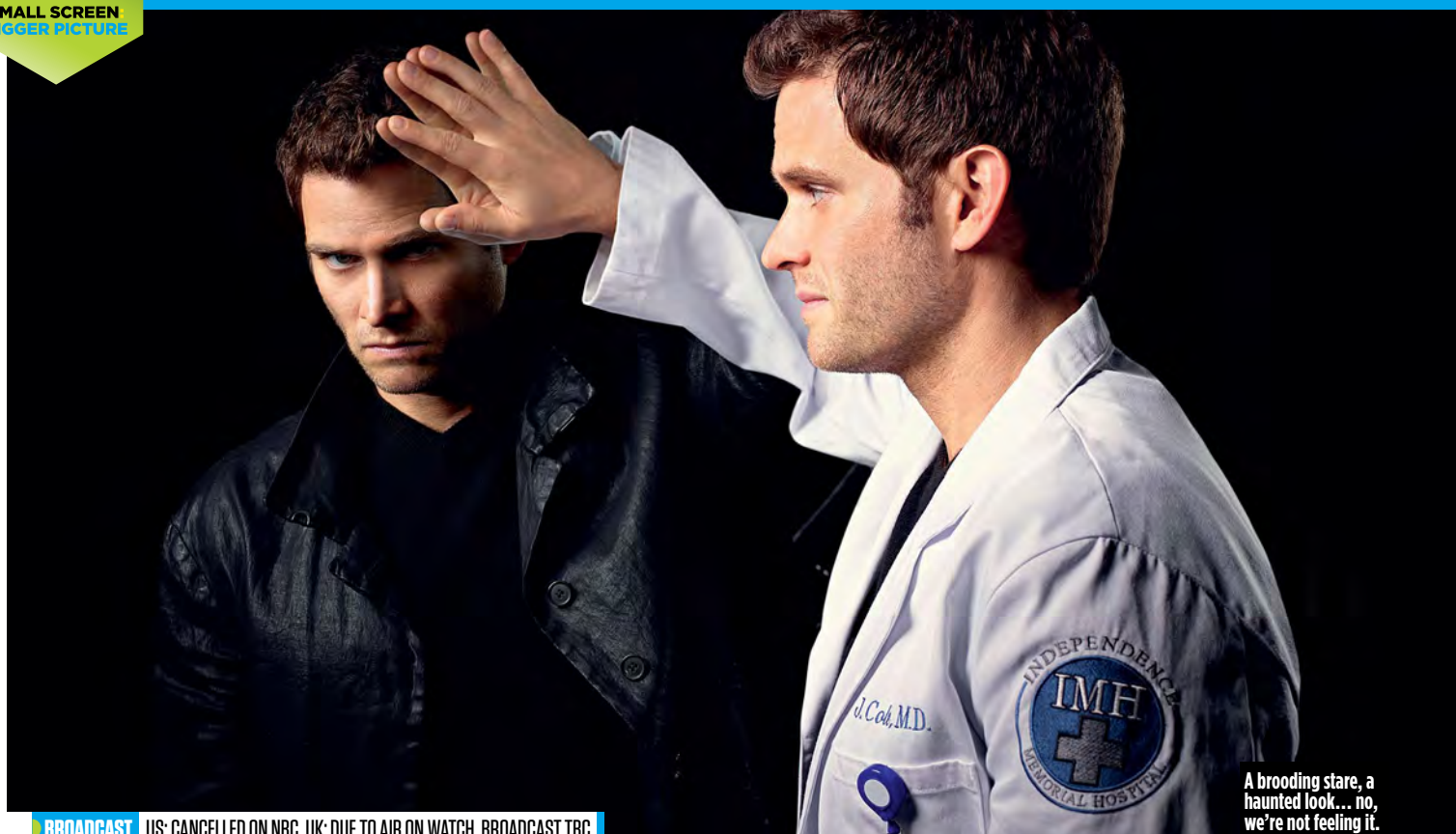
►Do you research the eras depicted in the flashback episodes?

Absolutely. I definitely checked out some films when we did the 1920s Prohibition era. Doing the flashback episodes is actually my favourite thing. They do a really nice job with the scenery, the set dressing. I love the fact that we have 160 years to play with. The minute it's getting boring in the present, we just go to the past. I love the 1960s – I would love to explore that era.

►Who would win in a fight – Stefan or Damon?

I would shank Ian [Somerhalder, who plays Damon] in the jugular, and he wouldn't last two seconds. That's in real life and on screen by the way. **Joseph McCabe**





A brooding stare, a haunted look... no, we're not feeling it.

BROADCAST US: CANCELLED ON NBC. UK: DUE TO AIR ON WATCH, BROADCAST TBC

Mercy Killing

DO NO HARM: On a Hyding to nothing

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, lurking, waiting, ready to pounce without mercy when you least expect it, are 11 episodes of *Do No Harm*. US network NBC tried to protect us. They tried to contain the terror before it spread too far, axing the show after a mere two episodes had inflicted their cruel and unusual brand of psychological warfare on an unsuspecting viewing public. But 13 episodes were made in all, which means that there are still 11 of these toxic televisual WMDs (weapons of mental deterioration) struggling to be seen. And you know that somehow, somewhere, they will succeed. Just when you thought it was safe to go back onto YouTube...

Actually, you don't have to worry so much. You can just switch it off. But spare a thought for us poor media journalists; if the remainder of *Do No Harm* is ever unleashed in some form somewhere, a poor sacrificial victim will be need to chosen to review it. It'll be like the Russian roulette scene in *The Deer Hunter* in the *SFX* offices when and if that day comes...

Slightly over the top? Sadly not. *Do No Harm*'s pilot is without any exaggeration one of the worst 45 minutes of TV drama that's been made in a long, long time. And unlike some other duds we've had the "pleasure" of covering

over the years – like Syfy's *Flash Gordon* – it isn't even so bad it's funny. It is simply dispiritingly naff.

The problem isn't so much a lack of originality, though its mind-boggling inability to offer anything even vaguely new to either of the genres it straddles – fantasy and medical drama – doesn't help matters. It's Steven Moffat's *Jekyll* by way of *My Own Worst Enemy* mixed with the more syrupy moments of *Casualty* (you know, the bits where the nurses help a patient overcome some personal tragedy after diagnosing emotional scars).

So we have a hot-shot brain surgeon, Jason, who has somehow become a hot-shot brain surgeon despite the fact he's out of action 12 hours a day from 8.25pm to 8.25am. That's when his evil alter ego Ian takes over. Or would take over, except Jason is currently knocking himself out every night with drugs. Or he would be, except the drugs are starting to fail. Either way, he's a brain surgeon who can't be on call for half the day. Ever. He must seriously piss off his colleagues who have to pick up all the slack.

Anyway, ill-thought-through central concept aside, there's so much more to loathe about the show. Star Steven Pasquale is hilariously double miscast – he's totally unconvincing as a surgeon and seems to think that all it takes to be a bad

guy is to throw your shoulders back, walk like Liam Gallagher with the squits and glare like a constipated Damon Salvatore (now there's a rare combination of symptoms). Not that we really get to see Ian being very evil. You'd think in a pilot for a show about a guy with an evil alter ego, we would get to see some outrageously evil antics to define his character. Instead we see him kick a wife-beater and tell a rival doctor he has a small penis, while another female doctor complains he was a bit rough with her (though we don't see that). Frankly, we've seen edgier episodes of *In The Night Garden*.

It's not even clear if it's trying to be funny, serious or a black comedy. Not that shows need to rigidly stick to one tone (that way lies only *Falling Skies*) but tonally *Do No Harm* is all over the place. Sometimes it's *Dexter*-lite; sometimes it's *Ugly Betty*; sometimes it's *ER*; sometimes it's *Dallas*. Maybe this is a subtle metaphor for the show's central multiple personality theme. Probably not, though.

It's more likely the writers and directors hadn't got a clue what they were trying to make.

Maybe future episodes would have improved. It's difficult to imagine they could get any worse. But after such a mindsearingly dreadful beginning, why would anyone want to stick around to find out? **Dave Golder**

FACT ATTACK!

- *Do No Harm* premiered with the lowest viewing figures ever for a drama on any of the USA's big four TV networks. The trailers must have done a good job of reflecting the quality of the show, then.
- Steven Pasquale (who plays Jason/Ian) is no stranger to utterly crud sci-fi – he starred in *Alien Vs Predator: Requiem*.
- *Do No Harm* survived twice as long as US shows such as *Osbourne's Reloaded* (a variety show hosted by Ozzy's family), *Secret Talents Of The Stars*, and *Dot Comedy*, all of which were axed after just one episode.



That's not
Batman hiding
in the shadows.

BROADCAST UK: SEASON ONE AIRING ON SKY 1 ON MONDAYS, US: AIRING ON THE CW ON WEDNESDAYS

Expanding Universe

ARROW: Time to bring some big-screen thinking to the small?

COMIC BOOK UNIVERSES ARE built on the big screen. Just watch as Warner chases the Marvel model with *Justice League* while Fox talks up plans to entwine its *Fantastic Four* and *X-Men* franchises in a shared cinematic reality. It's the new alchemist's dream: turn fanboy fantasy into box office gold.

TV seems to have no such grand ambitions when it comes to superheroic real estate. *Arrow*'s debut season has merrily raided DC's back pages – we've seen appearances by everyone from Deathstroke to the Huntress, with a crafty nod to *Blackhawk* along the way – but it stands as the lone outpost of its parent universe on the small screen.

Now the CW is looking to add another DC icon to their roster. Conceived by *Sex And The City*'s Allan Heinberg, *Amazon* promises a *Smallville* style take on *Wonder Woman*'s formative years (boy trouble, problem skin, learning to pilot an invisible jet, the usual stuff).

If it ever earns a greenlight we'll see two founder members of the JLA sharing a network.

Plenty of crossover potential, surely? "I think they all could exist in the same world," says CW president Mark Pedowitz. But *Arrow*'s exec producer Andrew Kreisberg fears a fundamental disconnect between the urban

bowman and the warrior princess: "Our show definitely takes place in a much more realistic world. There are no superpowers, superheroes or aliens..."

Shame they're not faster to grasp this opportunity. TV is, in many ways, the smarter place to translate a four-colour universe. The start-up costs are considerably cheaper, after all – a pilot episode is a low-risk proposition compared to gambling the studio wallet in the bloodying Thunderdome of an opening weekend.

And with hours of scheduling to fill there's a whole multiverse waiting to be strip-mined, with the kind of depth and texture that only episodic television can deliver. Think beyond the superhero box, execs: why not a deadline-powered newsroom drama focused on the *Daily Planet*? A Gotham City police procedural? The House of Mystery brand stamped on a *Twilight Zone* style horror anthology? Sgt Rock or Enemy Ace as a war-torn DC take on

Band Of Brothers? The rise of Lex Luthor retold *Sopranos* style? Endless possibilities.

With Marvel working to bring *SHIELD* to the air a second front just opened up in this particular war between universes. Don't be left behind again, DC. Bring the fight to primetime.

Nick Setchfield

FACT ATTACK!

- ▶ *Arrow* star Stephen Amell has definite conditions for any *Wonder Woman* crossover: "As long as she doesn't have superpowers then we're good!"
- ▶ As well as writing episodes of *Gilmore Girls*, *The OC* and *Grey's Anatomy*, Allan Heinberg has also penned a *Wonder Woman* DC comic.
- ▶ The Dark Knight remains strictly off limits to TV.
- ▶ Asked if Batman could ever visit *Arrow*'s Starling City CW prez Mark Pedowitz declared, "They're not in the same state..."
- ▶ *Batman* producer William Dozier made test footage for an abortive *Wonder Woman* TV show in 1967.

I MADE THIS

Building a broken USA for *Revolution*



A veteran of several Bad Robot projects, production designer Doug Meerdink is the man who makes contemporary North Carolina look like large swaths of a ruined, post-apocalyptic United States each week. Meerdink moved to the east coast to bring creator Eric Kripke's vision to life, and says that the speed with which they have to deconstruct our world to create a tech-free existence is quite a challenge...



"It's consistently the busiest and most ambitious project I've been on. In my early conversations with Eric, it was about creating a big world despite the fact we knew we would be filming in a much smaller world. A lot of what we do then is providing the audience with something that can expand. We use visual effects to expand sets but we try to get as much as we can in camera for scope. We knew going into it that the story would turn so we're always thinking about how our world changes from one region of the country to another region. On a practical level, it's looking at all that North Carolina has to offer. We also revisit the options with the writers so we can change things for the better from a visual sense, depending on what we find. We know our characters really well so now it's about placing them in interesting environments.

"For our story, there are areas that we leaned on like the more bucolic settings here. In our storylines showing differences in geography we've switched [colour] palettes for certain stories whether it's a town that might be a port city close to the water, or more open plains and vistas. We look around here and in the microcosm see things we can expand."

Revolution debuts on Sky1 in the UK in March, and continues on NBC in the US from 25 March.

Being Human:
bloody good.



BROADCAST FINISHES AIRING ON BBC THREE ON SUNDAY 10 MARCH

Only Human

BEING HUMAN: the end is nigh

FELL IN LOVE WITH BEING

Human early. In the pilot episode (commissioned by BBC Three as a one off in 2008, and featuring a largely different cast) there is a small moment where the original trinity sit in their local pub discussing which Hogwarts house they would like to be in, and dismiss Hufflepuff as the house of "safety scissors and glue."

The reference stuck with me. This wasn't fantasy with spaceships or utopian visions or even timey-wimey stuff, this was our world with our pop culture, a world where sometimes things were so rubbish that the highlight of your day was watching *The Real Hustle*, no matter what your supernatural powers. It was funny, witty and easy to relate to: a breath of fresh air.

Since then, of course, the show has undergone a ton of changes. Aidan Turner went to *Hobbiton*, then Sinead Keenan, Russell Tovey and finally Lenora Crichlow said goodbye. At every point, there were consequences. People died. Horribly. Stupidly. They killed a baby! With every shift the show has adjusted into something – yes – different, but still unmissable, funny and with a real sense of both heart and peril. It has defied critics and naysayers at every turn and gathered awards. Series five introduced a new vampire-werewolf-ghost line-up. Barring some slightly repetitive addiction metaphors aside, though, it's been as engaging, nerve-shredding and funny as ever. Our new trinity has bedded in, Phil Davis has been a disturbing Big Bad, albeit upstaged somewhat by the brilliant Rook, a civil servant fighting government austerity cuts in his own morally corrupt way. But like all good things, it's coming to an end.

I'm sad to see that *Being Human* will not be recommissioned, although relieved there's time to give it a proper ending. Better to raise a cup of tea in salute as it goes out on a high, than have it be unceremoniously cancelled amid Beeb budget cuts six months down the line or – worst of all – keep on going but getting ever more rubbish (*Supernatural*, I'm looking at you). Right?

Narin Bahar

FACT ATTACK!

- ▶ Since its pilot in 2008, *Being Human* has spawned five UK series, three US series, web show *Becoming Human*, three novellisations, a Facebook game and a greetings card range.
- ▶ Show creator Toby Whithouse promises the ending will be "an epic, thrilling and shocking finale that'll keep the fans guessing and speculating for years to come".
- ▶ The guesthouse where our heroes live is a genuine place belonging to a Barry resident called Gary Rowe.
- ▶ SFX has compiled a Spotify playlist of music from *Being Human* – <http://bit.ly/SFXBHSpotify5>.

BROADCAST SEASON THREE CURRENTLY AIRING ON SYFY IN THE US. SEASON ONE COMES TO WATCH IN THE UK IN APRIL

Clone Wars

BEING HUMAN (US): Vive la Difference

WHEN SYFY ANNOUNCED they were remaking *Being Human* for an American audience, there were the usual protestations from fans of the original. Toby

Whithouse's series is – quite rightly – well loved, and quickly established itself as a British classic. Why on earth would someone want to mess with that? The US version had a battle on its hands right from the start.

I'm not always a fan of foreign remakes – they're often so unnecessary – and so it was with some trepidation that I sat down to watch the first episode of *Being Human* (US) when it first aired. My fears were realised at the very start of the season, when familiar characters played out familiar plotlines in familiar settings.

It was almost as though Mitchell and co were faking American accents, but it quickly became evident that the writers were adding their own twists – subtly changing the nature of these early episodes, so that viewers who



And they say the best parties end in the kitchen...

knew the source material were wrong-footed when a recognisable plotline played out quite differently in the final reel.

After just a few episodes, the show veered off in new directions, introducing characters and concepts not seen in the UK version. The UK had only aired two series at this point, and as the American incarnation has twice as many episodes to a season, the programme makers had no choice but to go their own way,

and quickly. Luckily, they achieved this with a skill and sensitivity to the original series that we rarely see in remakes. The US version has retained the spirit of the UK original, while developing its own identity.

And if I were asked to choose between the UK and the US series? It'd come down to a flip of a coin. Luckily, however, I don't have to choose, as the shows – though similar in concept and execution – are different enough that I am able to enjoy both. **Lee Harris**

FACT ATTACK!

- ▶ The US vampire in residence is called Aidan, and is named after Aidan Turner who played Mitchell in the UK original.
- ▶ Each episode title references a song (eg "When I Think About You I Shred Myself").
- ▶ Who knew that Henry was such a popular vampire name? Kyle Schmid – who plays Aidan's progeny, Henry – was the lead actor in *Blood Ties*, in which he also played a vampire named Henry.



BROADCAST CURRENTLY AIRING ON SPACE IN CANADA; NO UK AIRDATE YET

Bo and Lauren
decide who's going
to buy the beer.

Doin' It For The Girls

LOST GIRL: Why *Lost Girl*'s attitude to lesbianism is a joy

REMEMBER WHEN *TRUE* *Blood* started airing in 2008 and everybody freaked out over the fact that it was basically wall-to-wall sex? And how it's been shocking us ever since by taking rutting to a whole new level?

Meanwhile, in Canada (more sentences need to start with those words), *Lost Girl* is doing everything *True Blood* ever managed to do when it comes to sex: the only difference is that it's doing it without the 18 certificate. It's also doing it *better*. If you were to ask me which show is braver when it comes to presenting sex, love and relationships, I'd say *Lost Girl* any day.

This is even more pertinent when it comes to showing women having sex. Unsurprisingly, *Lost Girl* has a large lesbian and bisexual fanbase. After a couple of years which showed them

tip-toeing around each other, it also now has a strong lesbian relationship at its centre (Bo and Lauren). But *Lost Girl* never treats same-sex relationships as a gimmick: at no point do you ever feel that a sex scene is sensationalised merely because it's happening between two women. This is an achievement that *True Blood*, for all its open-mindedness about sex, has never quite managed. When two women kiss on that show, there's still a nagging sense that it's been shot with straight male viewers in mind. It's not quite as overt as on some series, mind you, and obviously *True Blood* caters for all tastes, but the feeling's still there. On *Lost Girl* it doesn't matter who Bo's kissing (and she's a succubus, so she kisses a lot of people). What matters is whether she's in *love* with the person she's snogging, and that's that.

FACT ATTACK!

- ▶ Season three of *Lost Girl* has been reduced to 13 episodes. There's been no confirmation on a fourth season yet.
- ▶ If season four does happen, filming will start in late spring – just after Anna Silk has her first child! Good timing.
- ▶ In a recent interview with *The Huffington Post*, Ksenia Solo said: "Last season, we all came together and this season, we all split apart." Yikes!
- ▶ Rachel Skarsten plays Tamsin, Dyson's new partner. Linda Hamilton is playing her mother.

What a joy it is to see a television show present lesbian sex and relationships without that hideous "We're really doing it for the lads, snigger!" subtext. And how clever to have a love triangle between Bo (a woman), Lauren (a woman) and Dyson (a man so manly he actually growls when he's angry) in which

nobody cares about gender – all we care about is which of them will be happy. Homosexuality is treated as normally as heterosexuality is treated everywhere else, and I can't commend *Lost Girl* enough for tackling these relationships in the same matter-of-fact fashion they're undertaken by so many people in the real world.

Although, saying that, what a shame that it can only do this because Bo is a supernatural creature who has sexual magical powers. Still, you can't have it all...

Jayne Nelson

YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING... FRINGE

The *SFX* forum gives its verdict on the last ever episodes

▶ **Mr Cairo:** Well that finale was just awesome. I teared up a few times, but Walter telling Astrid that she had a beautiful name was a winner for me.
▶ **Kudos:** This wasn't about having a tightly written plot. This was about having all the emotional character moments. And they did all of that perfectly. *Fringe* has been my

favourite sci-fi show for a long time. This just cemented it.
▶ **Iora4dan:** Lovely moments for all our characters. Nods to the past and present. Oh *Fringe* – you were my (very) favourite thing.
▶ **James Ormiston:** The abrupt ending was my only complaint. I'd have happily sat through 20 minutes of epilogue.

▶ **Hedwig:** I thought that was pretty much perfect. Science has always come second to emotion on *Fringe*, so I don't really care about plot holes – I just assume it's sufficiently advanced science and leave it at that.
▶ **Fishy:** Walter Bishop, one of the all-time great science fiction characters.

▶ **Lowthor:** I can forgive time-travel plot holes because you'll never get time travel that actually works anyway.
▶ **Mr Speed:** How and why John Noble never got an Emmy is a mystery worthy of *Fringe* Division themselves.
▶ **buffster:** Caught the finale last night. Thought it was okay, but wasn't overly impressed

with season five as a whole to be honest. Loved the scene, though, with Walter talking to Peter about making the Observers float off – just because it would be cool to see.

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★★★★★ Superb ★★★★★ Good ★★★ Average ★★ Poor ★ Terrible

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Robot & Frank

One man and his droid

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Oz The Great And Powerful

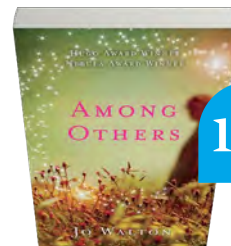
James Franco takes a journey down the Yellow Brick Road in Sam Raimi's prequel.



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Twilight: Breaking Dawn – Part Two

The paranormal romance franchise draws to a close with the mother of all scraps.



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Among Others

Jo Walton's Hugo Award-winning love letter to the joys of reading is presented as the diary of a 15-year-old sci-fi fan.

Oz The Great And Powerful

He's off to be the wizard

★★★★★

Release Date: 8 March

PG | 130 minutes

Distributor: Walt Disney

Director: Sam Raimi

Cast: James Franco, Mila Kunis, Rachel Weisz, Michelle Williams, Zach Braff

AFTER ALICE IN

Wonderland made it through the billion-dollar looking glass and sparked a renaissance in big-screen fairytales, Disney clearly wanted to keep the pixie dust of profitability flowing, but they're taking a risk skirting on the edges of *The Wizard Of Oz*, a film long since enshrined – fairly or otherwise – as a classic. Forced to eschew several of the classic Oz elements still legally held by Warner Brothers, here the Mouse House raids L Frank Baum's books and cranks up an origin story for the Wonderful Wizard – or *Hat-Man Begins*, you might say.

We're introduced to James Franco's Oscar "Oz" Diggs, who preens and performs through a low-rate magic act as part of a ramshackle travelling circus. Charming and cunning, but also yearning to be something greater (hello, introduction to one of the themes that will be rammed down our throats for the rest of the

Oz feels a touch on the bland side, but there's something of the anarchic *Evil Dead* spirit lurking

running time), Oscar's got an eye for the ladies and another for a quick buck. But when one of his past conquests' husbands – who also happens to be the circus strongman – decides to wreak revenge, Oz takes flight in his balloon and is whisked away from Kansas to the magical land that's home to witches, Munchkins and, in this case, *talking* monkeys, and discovers that his arrival has been prophesied. Oscar, you see, is supposed to save Oz from the clutches of the Wicked Witch, and everyone seems to believe he can do it. Everyone except him...

Belief in yourself and faith in your friends-as-family is one of those standard Disney tropes that seem contractually obligated to appear in every big film from the company. Nothing wrong with delivering useful messages, but they're repeated so often that it gets wearisome. Writers Mitchell Kapner and David Lindsay-Abaire (who explored similar territory for DreamWorks in *Rise Of The Guardians*) don't manage to overcome the crushing, clichéd feel of the lesson being taught, but they're helped by an engaging cast and the director's crafty style, and some adventurous production design by Robert Stromberg.

Franco grins and gurns his way through the lead, feeling occasionally like he's in a pantomime. It's the most theatrical – and seemingly awake – he's been in a role in ages, and that actually helps sell the fantasy around him. He gets some solid support from Braff, who plays his put-upon assistant Frank in Kansas and an even more deferential, chatty monkey named Finley in Oz. He scores some good lines, though it does sometimes feel as if he exists in a different film



"We're off to see... uh... me!"

to everyone else apart from Franco (no shock, since they were allowed to ad lib some of their banter on the Yellow Brick Road and beyond), as the rest are largely playing it straight. As for the witches, Mila Kunis and Rachel Weisz have some decent material as conflicted sisters Theodora and Evanora (the Wicked Witches of the West and East), while as Glinda (Good Witch of the South) Michelle Williams mostly has to be brave, noble, supportive and kind. She's fine, but it's hardly the best use of her talents, even if she does get the odd chance to show some backbone,

especially when she's battling her enemies.

Sam Raimi fares better than Tim Burton did, who got a little lost down the rabbit hole of his putative return-to-Wonderland tale. Oz still feels a touch on the bland side at times (especially with all that speechifying about heroism), but there's something of the anarchic *Evil Dead* spirit lurking at the fringes of the story, and we don't just mean the evil plants that accost our heroes and provide a brief burst of trademark Raimi POV. No, there's plenty of madness on display here,



including freaky witch moments, flashes of gruesome flying gibbons soaring and hard truths that could possibly scare smaller cinemagoers. And the clever wizard's use of low-fi tricks feels like the director who began with thrifty budgets channelling something of himself through the character. It's a touch that helps the main man come alive a little more on screen.

Raimi also has fun with the 3D, switching between using it to draw us in with depth of field and throwing things at the camera as if he were a B-movie showman. It's a little disconcerting at times, but he makes it

work. Also effective are the multiple nods to the 1939 film, including one or two possible character origins, the cropped monotone Kansas that gives way to Technicolor Oz, various chunks of scenery (the Emerald City is almost a dead ringer, albeit much bigger in scale here and carefully monitored to avoid legal copyright issues) and even a wink towards the original's finale.

The effects don't always seem as convincing as they might given the budget – plenty of scenes broadcast the fact that the actors spent a lot of time in front of giant green screens,

but at least Raimi had his team build some of the sets for real, which cuts down on that. While occasionally it all feels like Disney are following the Yellow Brick Road because they think it'll lead to the great big green river of cash, *Oz The Great And Powerful* does still have a lot to offer if you like your fantasy big, brash and jovial, but with a hint of horror in places. Oh yes, and fear not, Bruce Campbell fans: The Chin is in.

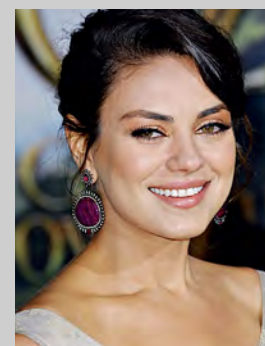
James White

? The film opens at the Baum Brothers Circus, a tip of the hat to *Wizard Of Oz* author L. Frank Baum.

MINDPROGE

Mila Kunis

Theodora in *Oz*



► What kind of witch do you play?

My character starts off incredibly naive. She's the youngest out of the three witches, and ultimately only wants to see the good in people. Glinda is naturally a wonderful human being on the inside and doesn't really have any internal battles. My character has a little bit of an internal fight, of good versus evil within her.

► How do you prepare to play a witch?

For a fantasy movie, you try to bring as much honesty as you can to the character, and ground the character in reality. Because it's such a non-realistic movie the only way to make this character relatable was to ground her. The beauty of this character is that there is an arc to her.

► Were you a fan of the books when you were growing up?

The first book that I ever read in English was *Return To Oz*. I was nine or ten. I loved it! I have a lot of memories attached to it.

► How does this film compare to other Oz adaptations, like the 1939 film or the stage musical *Wicked*?

We're not doing anything other than going by the books. So there's no comparison to the movie, there's no comparison to the musical.

► But its look does seem inspired by the 1939 film.

Nope! You can't say that, because you'll get us in trouble! So no – you're wrong on that one, bud!

Joseph McCabe

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Robot & Frank

Man and machine

★★★★★

Release Date: 8 March

12A | 89 minutes

Distributor: Momentum Pictures

Director: Jake Schreier

Cast: Frank Langella, Susan Sarandon, James Marsden, Liv Tyler, Peter Sarsgaard

AND THE PRIZE FOR THE LEAST

imaginative movie title of the year goes to... *Robot & Frank* not only focuses on the double act of a robot and a character called Frank, its leading man is called Frank in real-life. Absolutely nothing ambiguous there. Fortunately it seems that the time, energy and creativity left unused by the naming department have been redirected elsewhere, to make an inventive and touching near-future tale about friendship.

The ever-reliable Frank Langella plays the Frank half of the equation to perfection. He's a retired jewel thief who's starting to have problems with his memory, so son Hunter (James Marsden) takes the only logical course of action and buys him a robot home help. Well you would, wouldn't you?

The robot is utterly convincing because it's so basic. It's remarkable that the filmmakers managed to get so much out of something that looks so cheap, with dancer Rachael Ma putting in a brilliantly understated

performance in the suit. That said, you've got to wonder why any manufacturer would give an AI the HAL 9000-like tones of Peter Sarsgaard. Have these people never seen *2001*?

As Frank gradually comes to accept his new housemate, he convinces the machine to become his new partner in crime – old habits die hard, it seems. Here the movie could have been played as broad comedy, but ends up morphing into something way more satisfying. Sure, there are lines of dialogue that amuse, but *Robot & Frank* is more interested in exploring how the robot reawakens something in Frank and subsequently improves his condition.

First-time director Jake Schreier barely puts a foot wrong in terms of tone, only losing his way with a way-too-broad neighbour out to get Frank and a slightly jarring twist at the end. That the movie was a big hit at last year's Sundance festival should tell you everything else you need to know. *Robot & Frank* is the quintessential indie movie, from the big-name stars acting small to the quirky story and lo-fi score. More importantly, it's a small but perfectly formed tale with plenty to say about the nature of friendship.

Richard Edwards

? Rachel Ma suffered through 100-degree heat inside the suit and only managed 18 of the 20 days of shooting.

"Robot, we're saved – I see a big ship!"



Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters

Toil and trouble

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

15 | 88 minutes

Distributor: Paramount

Director: Tommy Wirkola

Cast: Jeremy Renner, Gemma Arterton, Famke Janssen, Thomas Mann, Derek Mears, Pihla Viitala

LIKE A BEWITCHED MORTAL

tempted by an alluring spell-caster, European filmmakers who hit it big are often drawn to American studio projects. Sometimes, it can lead to a nasty result, as the likes of Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck and *The Invasion*'s Oliver Hirschbiegel have discovered. The fate of Tommy Wirkola, who unleashed zombie Nazis on the world with *Dead Snow*, has not been quite so bad. But that's not to say *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* is exactly a winner, either.

This is one of those disappointing occasions when a movie that wants nothing more than to entertain and

amuse falls some way short of that aim. It's not that this tale of the all-grown-up fairytale duo and their continuing mission to battle witches is rotten, it's more just mundane.

Aside from a few flashes of fun, it sort of sits there, flopping like a fish out of water.

So what works? Well, Wirkola hasn't compromised on the gore,

delivering splashy decapitations and other witchy endings with relish. Gemma Arterton gives it her all as Gretel, and there are some fine prosthetics/animatronics on show.

But whatever flashes of inspiration there were in the development process, they weren't enough to combat the issues already present that poison the whole affair. It started with a stale script from DW Harper, which is sorely lacking in original laughs to balance the horror. Add to that some studio meddling (including a largely unnecessary decision to go with 3D), and a late, pace-killing, forced exposition dump, and you've got a mildly entertaining action comedy that sometimes feels like a chore.

It's a shame, as there was a chance for Wirkola to make a big impact here, and it's not as if the concept was out of his comfort zone. But with the film doing decently at the US box office, perhaps he'll have more clout next time around and live up to his promise. **Jim Blakey**

? Tommy Wirkola says that, growing up, *Hansel & Gretel* was his favourite fairytale; he used to scare himself listening to it at night.



Willo the Wisp liked to watch.



"Look, you order the prawn cocktail, I'll have the pâté."

John Dies At The End

It's a mad, mad, mad, mad universe

★★★★★

Release Date: 22 March

TBC | TBC minutes

Distributor: Revolver Entertainment

Director: Don Coscarelli

Cast: Chase Williamson, Rob Mayes, Paul Giamatti, Clancy Brown, Glynn Turman, Doug Jones

BONKERS. THAT'S THE BEST

way to describe Don Coscarelli's latest assault on your eyes, ears and funny bone. And we mean that in the best possible way. *John Dies At The End* is firmly in the spirit of *Bubba Ho-Tep*, the director's last tweak to the horror-comedy genre, albeit with the madness turned up to the next level.

Adapted from a book by the pseudonymous "David Wong" (aka Jason Pargin), John introduces us to Dave (Chase Williamson), one half of a team of "psychic exorcist investigators", who is dealing with his life going a little weird. See, Dave and best pal John (Rob Mayes) have recently tried a new street drug codenamed Soy Sauce, and to say the side effects are a little loopy is like saying that Genghis Khan had a thing for fighting. John, for one, has seemingly died already, but is leaving messages for Dave through the ether. It's a concept used to hilarious effect, particularly as our hero tries to figure out the best way to stay in touch, and discovers that anything – even a hot dog – can function as a phone.

Spilling his story to a sceptical journalist (Paul Giamatti), Dave lays bare a tale that includes monsters made of meat, flying moustaches that can kill, and dead people who just won't stay in the afterlife. Not

your average horror movie, then. Pargin's book proves to be the perfect source material for Coscarelli, full of bizarre imagery (you'll be left looking out of the corners of your eyes for spider-beasts) and leftfield plot turns.

Coscarelli hasn't cooked his insane ingredients perfectly, though – there are moments where things drag or you get the feeling that he threw everything he could find into the script pot and might have benefitted from checking the recipe. But strong performances from the leads, supported by the likes of

It'll be far too silly for some and too much of a head trip for others

Giamatti and Clancy Brown (as a weird stage magician with seemingly real powers) and the always-welcome presence of *Hellboy/Pan's Labyrinth's* Doug Jones in a small role effectively paper over most of the problems.

The film won't be to all tastes – it'll be far too silly for some and too much of a head trip for others, but if you enjoy the director's past work and you're in need of a little madness in your life, *John Dies At The End* is waiting for you. **Jim Blakey**

? Paul Giamatti has been a fan of Coscarelli since his brother snuck him into *Phantasm*, aged 12. He helped get *John Dies...* made.



Couples: annoying if you're single.

Beautiful Creatures

A tale of two casts

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

12A | 124 minutes

Distributor: Entertainment

Director: Richard LaGravenese

Cast: Alice Englert, Alden Ehrenreich, Jeremy Irons, Emma Thompson, Viola Davis

FOR A WHILE – A

tantalisingly long while – *Beautiful Creatures* looks like it might transcend the "Twilight with witches" blight of its marketing. Then it all goes horribly wrong.

The bizarre thing is, what works best about the film is what you might fear the most – the teen romance. It's the supernatural part that sucks.

Young Ethan Wate can't wait to get out of sleepy, parochial small-town South Carolina. He reads books, y'see, while the other locals ban them. Then he falls for a sensitive teen witch – or caster, as she prefers to be known – which is all fine and dandy until he meets the family, and Lena reveals she's pivotal in a fight between good and dark casters.

The early parts of the film are great. Gorgeously shot in some evocatively languid Southern locations, it benefits from a witty script and two genuinely loveable characters. You totally buy into their relationship, which is sweet, funny and compelling.

Then along come Jeremy Irons and Emma Thompson, camping things up outrageously as squabbling casters, apparently playing a game of "Who can do the worst accent?". The naturalistic approach gives way to a gaudy, gothy supernatural panto, with some hideously misjudged CG effects and a surfeit of fantasy plotting clichés.

It's like watching *Submarine* suddenly being invaded by the teachers from Hogwarts. A real shame. **Dave Golder**

? New Zealand-born Alice Englert is the daughter of Jane Campion, Oscar-nominated director of *The Piano*.

COMING SOON

15 MARCH

THE LAST EXORCISM: PART II

It turns out it was only the penultimate exorcism, as the 2010 horror gets a sequel.

22 MARCH

JACK THE GIANT SLAYER

Nicholas Hoult's farmhand travels through a gateway to rescue a princess in Bryan Singer's fantasy.

27 MARCH

GI JOE: RETALIATION

After the evil forces of Cobra frame GI Joe operatives and take control of all the world's leaders, Bruce Willis's general leads the fightback...



Bruce in familiar pose in *GI Joe*.

29 MARCH

THE HOST

Gattaca's Andrew Niccol adapts Stephenie Meyer's novel, in which parasitic aliens invade Earth by inhabiting human bodies.

5 APRIL

DARK SKIES An alien presence terrorises a suburban family in this SF horror (nothing to do with the '90s TV series of the same name).

THE ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN

In this Disney flick, a childless couple have their wishes answered when a mysterious boy appears. Best take a sickbag.

12 APRIL

OBLIVION On a ruined Earth decades after an alien invasion, Tom Cruise's drone repairman has his world turned upside-down after he rescues a female stranger...

SCARY MOVIE 5 Expect take-offs of *Paranormal Activity*, *The Hunger Games* and *Inception* in the latest feeble parody flick, a whole seven years after the last one.

19 APRIL

EVIL DEAD There'll be lashings of gore in this remake of Sam Raimi's 1981 cabin-in-the-woods classic.

26 APRIL

IRON MAN 3 Tony Stark takes on Ben Kingsley's Mandarin in the latest Marvel movie, directed by Shane Black and based on Warren Ellis's "Extremis" arc.

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part Two

Ex-Men: The Last Stand

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 11 March

12 | 110 minutes | £19.99 (DVD)/£22.99 (two-disc edition DVD), £25.99 (Blu-ray)

Distributor: Entertainment One

Director: Bill Condon

Cast: Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart, Taylor Lautner



THE TWILIGHT

Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part Two received nine Golden Raspberry Award nominations this year, with a nod in all but one category. Blimey, it must be a turkey of epic proportions.

Well, no. Ironically, it's probably the most non-Twihard-friendly film of the franchise. Doubly ironically, it didn't need to be, because let's face it, no matter how hard someone tries to convince you, "There's a genuinely great, bloody battle scene and it's actually quite funny in places too!" if you haven't felt the urge to watch a *Twilight* movie before, you're hardly going to start now.

And that's how *Breaking Dawn – Part Two* landed nine Razzie nominations. You want it to be bad. The zeitgeist demands that it be bad. The idea it might actually be bearable does not compute. And if you want to condemn something badly enough, you can find the evidence.

The first hour is dopey vampire soap: talky, sentimental and hampered by the fact that (amazingly for a pair

who are dating – on and off – in real life) there is zero on-screen chemistry between Pattinson and Stewart. The structure is bizarre. The plot is episodic, with a seemingly tacked-on threat instigated by a bit of a misunderstanding. There's a hideous CGI baby and Michael Sheen's still wearing that appalling wig. The dialogue rarely moves beyond a range with leaden at one extreme and trite at the other. And then there's that cheat of a twist, which is the laziest cinematic sleight of hand. See, easy.

But how about looking at this way? It's a vampire version of *X-Men*. Sounds a bit more exciting, eh? And it's not stretching a point too much.

Once the whole Bella's-baby plot has been resolved, the film becomes a story about two armies preparing for a showdown, and involves the Cullens making contact with various vampire allies, all of whom have special powers. Honestly, it's *X-Men* (or possibly *Ex-Men*) with fangs, and the film does a pretty good job of giving every one of its massive cast of super-vampires a scene or two to shine. There are even moments of real charm and wit.

Then we get that showdown, a 30-minute-long sequence set in one location. How many FX blockbusters do you know with the balls to have – effectively – one scene go on that long? Of course, the fact that a great chunk of the half hour is a BLOODY GREAT BATTLE helps. It's a hugely entertaining spectacle, surprisingly bloody at times too.

As for that cheat of a twist? Well, it's not a cheat, really. We won't give it away here, but suffice to say it's a clever visual way of portraying something that's woefully



Seconds later, the bear suddenly returned.

uncinematic in the book, and it does make narrative sense.

But it would have been pointless to market the final *Twilight* film as a vampire *X-Men*. No one would have believed the hype, and Twihards would probably have loathed the idea. *Breaking Dawn* is an efficient, rewarding finale for the loyalists, and really isn't bad enough to bother the rest of us. Certainly not enough for nine Razzie nominations. All of which should have gone to *Mirror Mirror*.

EXTRAS: As usual with *Twilight* shiny disc releases, there are plenty of impressive extras for fans prepared to pay that little bit extra.

The basic, single-disc DVD release just has a commentary by director Bill Condon and coverage of the UK premiere. Condon's commentary isn't exactly sparkling but provides an interesting insight into some of artistic decisions, and he touchingly defends his cast against all press criticisms.

Breaking Dawn is an efficient, rewarding finale for the loyalists



Both the limited edition two-disc DVD and Blu-ray releases (rated) add a stunning amount of documentaries and featurettes. The centrepiece is the hour-long “Forever: The Filming Of *Breaking Dawn – Part Two*” which is an excellently put-together combination of interviews and genuinely interesting behind-the-scenes footage. It features a great comedy moment involving an only partly-tame cougar’s inability to leap onto a rock, some stunt men seriously going for it while planning out the end

battle, and Stephenie Meyer admitting she could have quite happily lived in the cottage set. However, no amount of enthusing will ever convince us that the CG baby Renesmee was a good idea.

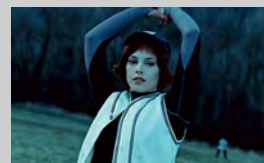
Shorter features include “Two At Once: Filming Both Movies At The Same Time”, “Tingles & Chills: Special Vampire Powers”, “Carlisle’s Contacts: The New Vampires”, “Judge, Jury & Executioner: Aro & the Volturi”, Being Charlie Swan”,

“Breaking Dawn – Part Two At Comic Con” and “Stars On The Black Carpet”. There’s also a Green Day music video and the now legendary “Jump To Edward” and “Jump To Jacob” features (which only play the scenes with either Pattinson or Lautner in them). Blu-ray purchasers also get a “Picture In Picture” movie mode. **Dave Golder**

? Eleven-year-old Mackenzie Foy (Renesmee) had a “swear jar” on set. Robert Pattinson says, “She made 850 bucks or something.”

TWILIGHT HIGHLIGHTS

Five genuinely great things the *Twilight Saga* gave us



Vampire Baseball

► The Cullens playing super baseball in *Twilight* is the best bit of the film – and not just because Alice looks so damned cute as a pitcher (though that is a large part of it).



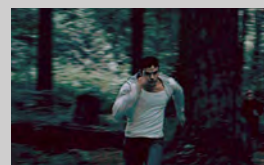
Vampire Smackdown

► The final fight in *New Moon* is brilliantly staged and shot: brutal, physical and making the most of these guys’ vampiric abilities to present a fight scene that looks fresh and unique.



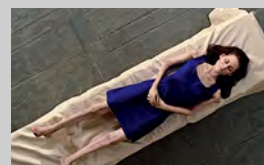
Jasper’s Story

► The atmospherically shot flashbacks to Jasper’s past in *Eclipse* suddenly make him the most interesting character in the series. Shame later films never capitalised on them.



The Six Million Dollar Shot

► In *Eclipse*, for the first time in screen history, super-fast running was made to look cool without having to revert to that old slow motion cliché from *The Six Million Dollar Man*.



Painfully Thin

► The scenes of the emaciated Bella immediately prior to giving birth to Renesmee in *Breaking Dawn – Part One* are really quite shocking, bordering on Cronenbergian body horror.

BLU-RAY DEBUT

Dracula



The stakes are high-def

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 18 March

1958 | 12 | 79 minutes | £24.99 (double-play Blu-ray)

Distributor: Lionsgate Home Entertainment

Director: Terence Fisher

Cast: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Michael Gough, Melissa Stribling, Carol Marsh



SEX. THAT WAS

Hammer's most significant addition to Bram Stoker's classic tale. A first-time viewer might find that difficult to appreciate; by modern-day standards, Christopher Lee's Count, monobrowed and greying at the temples, is not exactly a knicker-dampening leading man. However, he's undoubtedly a charismatic figure, and certainly more alluring than Bela Lugosi – or Stoker's original bloodsucker, who sported a white moustache.

Besides, what's important about Lee's Dracula isn't what he looks like, but how female victims react to him – with a “be gentle with me” shiver of terror mingled with a flush of erotic excitement. Melissa Stribling's Mina Harker returns from a nocturnal encounter with her undead lover brimming over with barely-disguised sexual fulfilment (director Terence Fisher told the actress to imagine she'd just had the seeing-to of her life).

Tasked with producing a script that could be produced on a modest budget, writer Jimmy Sangster compressed the book's geographical scale, and stripped out many of its most memorable elements, such as Renfield, the fly-eating madman; the

ship which runs aground at Whitby; and the sight of Dracula scaling the side of his castle.

Furthermore, Jonathan Harker is no longer a naive solicitor, but an associate of Van Helsing, who takes a job at Castle Dracula in order to stake its owner. This is problematic: the notion that he's been hired to “index Dracula's library” is faintly laughable, and if Harker knows who this fiend is all along, why's he blasé about revealing his fiancée's name, and so incautious when he encounters Dracula's “bride”?

None of this really matters, though, because so many key cast and crew are at the top of their game. Peter Cushing transforms Van Helsing into a far more authoritative and active figure. Lee is mesmerizing as the Count, switching from urbane charm to animalistic savagery with consummate ease. Terence Fisher keeps the pace measured for the most part, but doesn't spare the shocks. It's a brisk, exciting film with lavish-looking production design and a pulse-pounding score.

Hammer's finest hour? Debatable. But it's certainly the film which best encapsulates their output, and which proved the most influential.

EXTRAS: You can watch either the 2007 BBFC restoration, or a new version. The latter, thrillingly, features two brief snatches of additional footage (20 seconds in total). In the first, Dracula gives Mina Harker a series of swift kisses, then pushes her down onto the bed; in the second, he claws flesh from his face as he disintegrates. Deemed

The pace is measured, but the director doesn't spare the shocks

beyond the pale by the censors, these sequences were lost for decades until being discovered on a horrendously damaged Japanese print. The restoration team have done a remarkable clean-up job – you can barely spot the joins.

There are a decent selection of bonuses. The half-hour “Dracula Reborn” is billed as a making-of piece, but is more of a critical appreciation. Interviewees include the late writer Jimmy Sangster, actress Janina Faye, Mark Gatiss and a clutch of Hammer mavens. Fortunately, a commentary by experts Marcus Hearn and Jonathan Rigby is crammed with all the behind-the-scenes data you could wish for: they discuss script changes, regale us with cast and crew anecdotes from old interviews, and point out small details like the “bride”'s blue high heels!

“Resurrecting Dracula” (17 minutes) discusses the restoration; it's mostly rather dry, but the delight of a Hammer fan as he recounts viewing that rare Japanese print is infectious. “Censoring Dracula” (nine minutes) discusses Hammer's dealings with the BBFC. Best of the bunch is “The Demon Lover” (28 minutes), a talking-head discussion of the film by Sir Christopher Frayling – his erudite insights transcend the usual critical platitudes.

Elsewhere, there's a 12-minute recording of Janina Faye reading a chapter of Stoker's novel (recorded at a screening); an extensive gallery of ads, posters and stills; and a Dracula-themed episode of '90s clip-show *The World Of Hammer* (25 minutes). For completism's sake, the horribly scarred Japanese reels (35 minutes) are also presented in their original condition. **Ian Berriman**

? In order to make Dracula a more unearthly presence, all the sounds of his footsteps were removed from the soundtrack.



The inside of Fred's stomach was brilliant.

The Man With The Iron Fists

Shame on a RZA

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 1 April

2012 | 18 | 96 minutes | £17.99 (DVD)/£22.99 (Blu-ray)/£27.99 (Blu-ray steelbook)

Distributor: Universal Pictures UK

Director: RZA

Cast: Russell Crowe, RZA, Lucy Liu, Rick Yune, Jamie Chung



IRON FISTS

opens with a massive scrap set to Wu-Tang Clan classic “Shame On A N***a”. It's a statement of intent:

even before the “Quentin Tarantino Presents...” credit appears, you know the movie's cut from the same history-warping cloth as *Inglorious Basterds* and *Django Unchained*.

Set in 19th century China, it's narrated by a nameless blacksmith (RZA). A shipment of gold is travelling through Jungle Village, and various parties want to get their hands on it. Russell Crowe is hard-living English emissary Jack Knife, while Lucy Liu plays deadly Madam Blossom. But the plot's irrelevant, merely a framing device for a lot of punching, kicking and stabbing in an over-amped, semi-ironic Shaw Brothers style.

Sound good? It's not. The fight scenes are repetitive and the dialogue's excruciating. *Basterds* mixed extreme violence with fist-gnawing tension; this is loud and very silly. Musically, RZA is a genius. He is not, however, a good writer, director or actor.

It could have been worse... The original cut was four hours long, and RZA intended to release it in two instalments, but was talked down by co-writer Eli Roth. Phew. **EXTRAS:** The DVD's vanilla. The Blu-ray (rated) features both the theatrical release and an extended cut (12 minutes longer), 24 minutes of deleted scenes, and brief featurettes. **Will Salmon**

? Fists was intended to crossover with *Django Unchained*, with a younger version of the blacksmith appearing in that film.



“Another bloody power cut!”

Person Of Interest Season One

Big Brother is watching you... but he's a nice chap really

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 18 March

2011-2012 | 12 | 1,012 minutes | £29.99 (DVD)/£39.99 (Blu-ray)

Distributor: Warner Bros Home Entertainment

Creator: Jonathan Nolan

Cast: Jim Caviezel, Michael Emerson, Taraji P Henson, Kevin Chapman, Enrico Colantoni



PERSON OF

Interest is stylish, confident and sexy – the Abercrombie & Fitch of TV shows. Star Jim Caviezel is the guy who'd appear in the shop window wearing a sharp suit: indeed, his character's actually nicknamed "The Suit" by the cops chasing him.

A CIA officer named John who's fallen on hard times, he's befriended by the mysterious Harold Finch (Lost's Michael Emerson). The geeky Finch built a mighty mega-computer for the US government which can track the movements of everybody in the country via CCTV, cellphones, computers... you name it, this computer can read it. While it was

designed to ward off terrorist threats, it also knows when ordinary people are going to be killed. The government doesn't give a hoot, so Finch saves these lives behind their backs – and he needs John's CIA skills to do it.

So begins the relationship

between this odd couple (Abercrombie and Finch, you could say) and a show that's evolved into a gripping primetime thriller. Emerson and Caviezel are simply glorious together, both of their characters damaged and endearingly twitchy, while two NYPD detectives who get



Safe Search Off always grabs the attention.

drawn into their world add a healthy frisson. By the time you've finished with this season you'll be more than Interest-ed – you'll be an addict.

EXTRAS: An extended pilot (featuring 12 extra minutes of footage) with a commentary from creator Jonathan Nolan and producer Greg Plageman, a featurette about surveillance (15 minutes), and a gag reel.

Jayne Nelson

DRINKING GAME

TAKE A DRINK WHEN...

- Finch uses a bird's name as a pseudonym.
- John surprises an attacker with his lightning-fast CIA fight training.
- Someone's phone gets cloned.
- Detective Fusco is bullied into helping Finch and John and whines about it.
- Someone talks about the fact that John wears a suit all the time.
- There's a flashback to John's CIA past or Finch's tech past.
- Either John's lost love or Finch's lost love makes an appearance.
- Finch is forced to help John by dressing up as someone.

Silent Hill: Revelation

Mist opportunity



★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 18 March

2012 | 15 | 94 minutes | £19.99 (DVD)/£22.99 (Blu-ray)/£25.99 (Blu-ray 3D)

Distributor: Lions Gate Home Entertainment

Director: Michael J Bassett

Cast: Adelaide Clemens, Kir Harington, Deborah Kara Unger, Martin Donovan, Malcolm McDowell



EXTRACT FROM

the minutes of a recent Silent Hill Town Council meeting:

Councilman Jon: So, item 34c, the new film...

Councilwoman Vicky: Yes, we hired Solomon Kane helmer Michael J Bassett to make a terrifying film promoting *Silent Hill* to outsiders.

CMJ: Did he capture its misty ambience, its wailing klaxons, its bum-faced nightmare monsters?

CWV: Frankly, no. He's come back with what's like a *Hellraiser* film directed by The Chuckle Brothers.

CMJ: But we hired a great cast! Malcolm McDowell! Two Starks!

CWV: Thing is, we could only afford one minute of exposition-belching per actor. So Michael



"What's Stafford Cripps doing here?"

padded it out with an emo Adelaide Clemens wandering around a factory filled with S&M mime artists. The biggest scare is a Pop-Tart emerging from a toaster.

CMJ: What of Pyramid Head, our iconic sex offender and executioner?

CWV: Ah. Michael has turned him into an antihero with a side job as a carnny. I doubt we'll be getting any new tourists off the back of this.

CMJ: Bang goes the new bandstand, then.

EXTRAS: On the DVD: director's commentary; deleted scenes; three short featurettes; a bit on an Orlando attraction; the trailer. The Blu-rays (rated) *don't* have the featurettes, but add a Making Of (45 minutes), an intro, and a short promo.

Jon Hamblin/Vicky Hodgskin

Kit Harington had to stop playing *Silent Hill* because it was too scary. He'll never defeat the White Walkers with that attitude.

Lost Girl Season One

Being a succubus can suck

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2010-2011 | 15 | 550 minutes | £24.99

Distributor: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Creator: MA Lovretta

Cast: Anna Silk, Ksenia Solo, Kris Holden-Ried, Zoie Palmer, Rick Howland, KC Collins



YOU HAVE TO

pity Bo (Anna Silk) at the start of this series. She's lived a strange life, baffled by magical powers that manifest when she has sex, usually resulting in her unfortunate partner winding up dead. As you can imagine, that's no fun. Thankfully, in the energetic pilot episode Bo discovers what's "wrong" with her: she's a succubus who feeds off sexual energy. She's also just one magical being in a vast world filled with Fae, weird creatures who live alongside humans in two groups: Dark and Light. (Three guesses what each group is like.)

Understandably rather cheesed off by the fact that both groups want to claim her as their own – Bo's a free spirit, yo! – she simply teams up with her friend Kenzi (Ksenia Solo) instead and sets about doing nice



Their new single rocks.

things like saving lives. Oh, and having sex. She does a lot of that, although she tries *really* hard not to kill people any more...

Lost Girl is what *Buffy* would have been like if she'd spent less time saving the world a lot and more time listening to her libido. It's really good fun, stuffed with memorable characters (and fashions – Kenzi's love of corsets is legendary) and refreshingly free of moral preaching. Add to this the fact that Silk really is magnetic as a succubus, and there's a pleasing love triangle between her and wolf-cop Dyson (Kris Holden-Ried) and fully human doctor Lauren (Zoie Palmer), and you've got a show that's small yet perfectly formed.

EXTRAS: None. **Jayne Nelson**

Throughout high school, Anna Silk had intense, recurring nightmares where it felt like something was sitting on her chest.

Doctor Who Special Editions

Human sacrifice and alien parasites

The Aztecs

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 11 March

1964 | U | 99 minutes | £19.99

Distributor: BBC Worldwide

Director: John Crockett

Cast: William Hartnell, Carole Ann Ford, Jacqueline Hill, William Russell, Keith Pyott, John Ringham

The Ark In Space

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1974 | U | 100 minutes | £19.99

Director: Rodney Bennett

Cast: Tom Baker, Elizabeth Sladen, Ian Marter, Kenton Moore, Wendy Williams

FROM THE DVD RELEASES,

you'd think the First Doctor exclusively visited violent periods of Earth history. Last time was the French Revolution; this month it's another era steeped in blood.

After companion Barbara is mistaken for a reincarnated high priest, she tries to use her position to end human sacrifice – to the Doctor's horror. With their lives at stake, Barbara must pit her wits against those suspicious of her divinity. It's Jacqueline Hill's finest hour. But the show is stolen by John Ringham as the High Priest of Sacrifice, doing his best Richard III. You half-expect him to launch into "Now is the winter of our discontent".

"The Aztecs" reputation is as a thoughtful treatise on altering the timeline, but it's just as interested in dire peril, from death in combat to drowning and poisoning. Weirdly, there's whimsical comedy too, as the Doctor accidentally gets engaged!

It's also educational – sometimes crudely, with lines like, "But the Aztecs didn't have the wheel!" It's a shame the dialogue's so fustily formal – with the Aztecs preferring "The aged servant of Yetaxa" as a term of address to the simple "Doctor".

Fourth Doctor adventure "The Ark In Space" is often seen as the start of '70s *Who*'s golden years. It's easy to see why. This is a story brimming with confidence. The first episode has a wonderfully ominous tone, as the TARDIS crew explore a seemingly deserted vessel containing the cryogenically frozen survivors of Earth, which has been infiltrated by insectoid aliens the Wirrn. While it's inevitably let down by dodgy creature effects, the set design is phenomenal, conjuring a starkly lit haunted house in space.

There are many wonderful moments (particularly Ark commander Noah's horrifying transformation into a Wirrn), but it's the warmth and camaraderie of the regulars that make this story such an enduring favourite.

EXTRAS: These special editions carry over the extras from the original DVD release, adding second discs of new bonuses.

"The Aztecs" snags the most exciting one: the recently-recovered third episode of 1965's "Galaxy 4", placed into context via a fan reconstruction of the other three episodes (pieced together from audio, clips, stills, and CG animation). A simplistic tale with an unsubtle "Don't judge by appearances" moral, it sees the Doctor caught up in a conflict between the hideous but

While it's let down by dodgy effects, the set design is phenomenal

peaceful Rills and the war-like, all-female Drahvins. Stephanie Bidmead is excellent as the Drahvins' ruthless leader, and the Rills' robotic servants, the Chumbles, are cute as hell.

Also new are two rare '60s clips: a skit from comedy show *It's A Square World* (seven minutes), and a VT from "youth" show *A Whole Scene Going* (five minutes). The former features Clive Dunn dressed as Hartnell's Doctor (though actually playing a rocket scientist); the latter goes on the set of 1966 movie *Daleks: Invasion Earth 2150AD*.

Finally, "Doctor Forever: Celestial Toyroom" (23 minutes) takes a light-hearted, affectionate look at *Who* merch through the decades. Interviewees include Russell T Davies and Mark Gatiss, but the highlight's a chap showing off the wonky wooden Daleks made by his father. Aw! Finally, *The Realms Of Gold* (50 minutes) is a 1969 documentary about the Conquistador campaign that ended the Aztec empire; it features a score by *Who* theme arranger Delia Derbyshire.

"The Ark In Space" making-of doc "A New Frontier" is interesting stuff, with producer Philip Hinchcliffe discussing the extensive rewrites required early on in production. "Doctor Forever: Love And War" (28 minutes) looks at the novel lines that ran while the show was off air; it's a decent overview, if a little shallow. There's heartwarming archive footage of Tom Baker turning on the Christmas lights in Derry. You also get a condensed repeat version that lops off 20 minutes, some 8mm clips from the filming of "Robot", an alternative title sequence and lots of PDFs – including a Crosse & Blackwell colouring book! **Ian Berriman/Will Salmon**

“Aztecs” writer John Lucarotti also wrote the original script for “Ark”, but it was totally rewritten by the script editor.



Misfits series five was looking up.

Defying Gravity

Defies enjoyment

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2009 | 15 | 538 minutes | £29.99

Distributor: Mediumrare

Creator: James D Parriott

Cast: Ron Livingston, Malik Yoba, Andrew Airrie, Paula Garcés, Florentine Lahme, Karen LeBlanc



THIS TV SHOW

deserves to be liked. It's so earnest. But it's like an introvert at a party – a little distant, and well, boring. SF TV demands extroversion.

Charting a near-future voyage to the nine planets (it was made before Pluto was demoted), *Defying Gravity* takes a *Grey's Anatomy* approach to astronauts, with the science fiction twist of a telepathic something in a pod secretly running the mission.

The show was cancelled after 13 episodes. Neither factual enough to be enlightening, nor SFnal enough to be entertaining, *Defying Gravity* goes to some lengths to establish some scientific truths, yet the astronauts are all head cases, and messages zip over 30 million miles of space in an instant, allowing endless heart-to-hearts between parted lovers.

Is it a romance show? SF? Realism? All and none of the above. The characters mesh well, but the series makes the fatal error of playing the long game with them. Nothing happens. We get to one planet, Venus, right at the end. Many SF series save money with tense "bottle episodes", but this is one long bottle series.

Real astronauts are rock-solid, thoughtful people. Introverts, actually; competent, capable, modest and highly intelligent. This show is not enough of those things. **EXTRAS:** A gallery, deleted scenes and documentary. The latter's a preview piece, which tells us nothing about how the story would have progressed. **Guy Haley**

Peter Howitt, aka Joey from '80s sitcom *Bread*, features as a journalist in the show, and also directed three episodes.



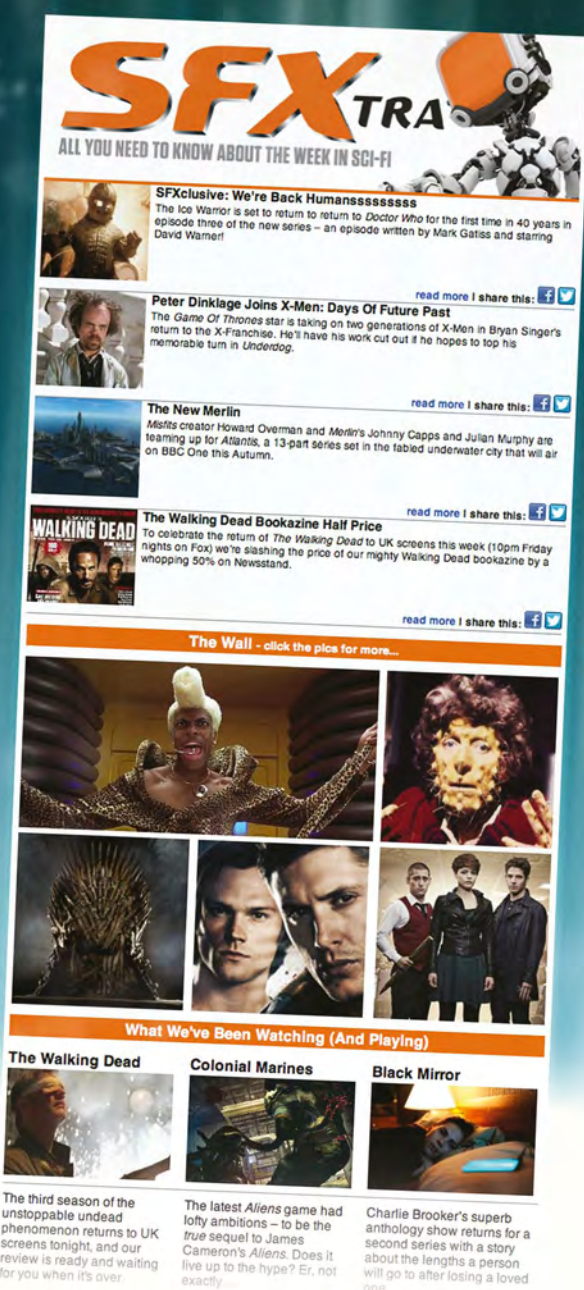
"And I found this one on the window sill."

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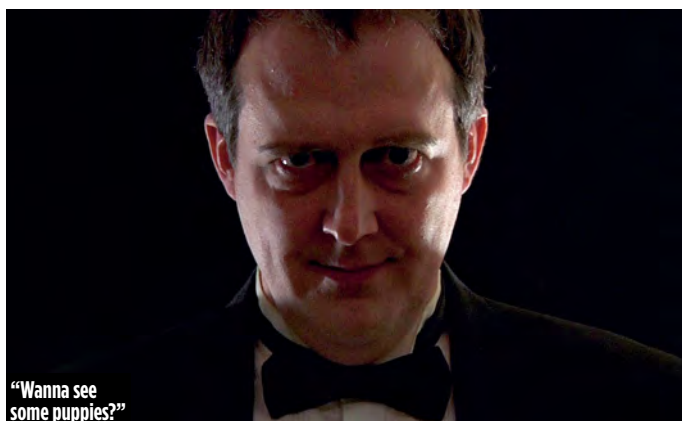
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"Wanna see some puppies?"

Room 237

Overanalysing the Overlook

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 11 March

2012 | 15 | 102 minutes | £19.99

Distributor: Metrodome Distribution

Director: Rodney Ascher

Interviewees: Bill Blakemore, Juli Kearns, Jay Weidner



IF THIS

documentary proves one thing, it's that Jack Nicholson's caretaker wasn't the only person left trapped in the maze in *The Shining*. Stanley Kubrick's 1980 horror seems to have driven some of its audience round the bend too.

Audio recordings of five people with involved theories about the film's "hidden meanings" are illustrated via slow-mo replays, clips from Kubrick's oeuvre and witty snippets from cultish genre flicks.

Bill Blakemore makes the best case, asserting that the film concerns Native American genocide,

though the fact that his starting point was a can of baking powder leaves you wondering whether anyone's had an epiphany about the deep significance of the Heinz tomato ketchup in the same shot.

At times, the search for evidence becomes downright hilarious, as we're told that a figure in a poster resembles a minotaur (it doesn't), or that Kubrick's face can be seen in some clouds (only if you're wearing glasses with a bearded man felt-tipped on them).

Still, Kubrick fans will find the way the film points out things you may not have noticed – a disappearing chair, an office with an impossible window – interesting, regardless of whether you consider such things to be continuity errors or carefully seeded clues.

EXTRAS: None. **Ian Berriman**

? All the interviews were done by phone, with the interviewees using digital recorders the director had sent them.



Warwick's chewing gum got stuck to the bed again.

BLU-RAY DEBUT

Willow

Size matters

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 11 March

1988 | PG | 120 minutes | £15.99

Distributor: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment

Director: Ron Howard

Cast: Warwick Davis, Val Kilmer, Joanne Whalley, Jean Marsh



"IT IS A TIME OF dread", a title card tells us. That'll be George Lucas's mid-'80s slump, then, the age of dwindling mojo that

found him taking the blame-bullet for the gruesome likes of *Howard The Duck* and *Ewok Adventures: Caravan Of Courage*.

Willow sees Lucas struggling to reclaim the kind of grand fairytale adventure that made *Star Wars* a phenomenon. It's built from similar folkloric beats: a farm kid hero learning the ways of magic, a perilous quest, the storming of a dark stronghold (and throws in

echoes of the stories of Herod and Moses as part of its mythic pick 'n' mix). More shamelessly, it files the serial numbers off *The Hobbit*.

It's a film that never quite ignites. Ron Howard has a painterly eye for a fantasy landscape – well served on this high-def release – but his action sequences are functional, while some clunking comedy sidekicks prophesy the long, dark shadow of Jar Jar Binks.

EXTRAS: Ron Howard introduces a reassuringly corny '80s Making Of. "Willow: An Unlikely Hero" intercuts modern-day reminiscences from Warwick Davis with his video diary from the shoot. The deleted scenes are more of a bonus Making Of, mixing editing suite casualties with plenty of talking head action from Ron Howard and behind-the-scenes footage. 2001 featurette "From Morf To Morphing" sees ILM's Dennis Muren discuss the film's pioneering use of morphing tech. Finally, there's a brief but beautiful tribute to the lost art of matte paintings.

Nick Setchfield

? Warwick Davis is also a director of Willow Management, a talent agency mainly representing actors under five feet tall.

ROUND-UP

THE AMAZING MR BLUNDEN

Release Date: 11 March

1972 | U | 99 minutes | £15.99



This charming family adventure has been out on DVD before, but that was a decade ago now, so this reissue is very welcome. Directed by *The Railway Children's* Lionel Jeffries, it sees two children from 1915 travel back in time 100 years to save two other sprogs from their wicked housekeeper. **We said:** "Full of innocent wonder and delicate whimsy, it's a film that reminds you just what we've lost by becoming big, horrible adults."

DARK

Release Date: 11 March

2007 | 18 | £14.99



This bleak, claustrophobic Spanish film, originally released as *La Hora Fria* (meaning *The Dark Hour*) has echoes of *Day Of The Dead* and *28 Days Later*. Set in a post-apocalyptic future after a nuclear/biological war, it follows eight people living in an underground base, menaced by zombie-like mutants and heat-hunting ghosts. Featuring gloomy cinematography, decent performances and a thought-provoking final-shot twist, it's well worth a watch.

GHOSTS OF SHERWOOD

Release Date: 25 March

2012 | 15 | 111 minutes | £15.99



After selling his soul to a witch, Robin Hood is slaughtered in battle. When Marian and Little John (*Friday The 13th's* Kane Hodder) use a potion to bring Robin and his Merry Men back to life, they unfortunately turn them into rampaging zombies. It might sound like there's dim-witted fun in store here, but there isn't. Shot in Germany and featuring terrible acting and atrocious sword fights, this low-budget effort is an awful mess; some attractive locations are the only redeeming factor.

LOVE BITE

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2012 | 15 | 87 minutes | £19.99 (DVD)/£24.99 (Blu-ray)



A sensitive young chap from a seaside town – one of a group of four lads all equally desperate to lose their cherry – falls in love with a mysterious girl who might just be a werewolf in this gross-out comedy. **We said:** "Slapdash nonsense. The able cast struggle endlessly with a script packed with tired clichés. With a crudeness that feels forced rather than gleeful, it's a cinematic frisson definitely not worth holding out for."

6 DEGREES OF HELL

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2012 | 18 | 87 minutes | £15.99



Corey Feldman plays a paranormal investigator checking out a tourist attraction called Uncle Jack's House of Horror. After a bunch of haunted crime scene artefacts are taken there, evil energy's released which transforms the actors working in it into demonic creatures. That's just part of the confusing, multi-stranded plot, which also features a baffling number of flashbacks. *Lost Boys* fans, don't get too excited about the presence of Feldman – he doesn't get much screen time.

The Bay

Don't drink the water

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 18 March

2012 | 15 | 81 minutes | £15.99 (DVD)/Blu-ray

Distributor: Momentum Pictures Home Entertainment

Director: Barry Levinson

Cast: Kristen Connolly, Christopher Denham, Kether Donohue



THE FOUND-

footage genre increasingly feels like a played-out phenomenon – yes, we're fixing you with a long, hard stare, *Paranormal Activity 4* – but it remains a useful bolt-hole for any filmmaker whose ambition outstrips their resources.

Indie chiller *The Bay* mounts an eco-minded apocalypse on a minuscule budget, with a cast of unknowns, far beyond the Hollywood zipcode. It's very much a career swerve by Barry Levinson, best known for such high-performance studio fare as *Rain Man*. Set in a toxin-blighted coastal town on the shores of Maryland, this is clearly a passion project for local boy Levinson, who powers his drive-in movie frights with a heartfelt rage against real-world pollution.



It's a cautionary tale whose creeping horror is assembled from an inventive array of sources: Skype confabs, security cams, text messages, 911 calls, even a boroscope that plunges deep into the manky gullet of a parasite-infested fish. This footage generates an energy that almost camouflages the clichés: fourth of July holiday massacres, shifty mayors, girls stripping to meet their watery doom...

As an exercise in lo-fi shivers it's fitfully compelling, but the plot runs out long before the credits and its characters are ultimately so much scare-bait. Found footage fakes reality but still needs to fight to make you care.

EXTRAS: A Making Of and a trailer. **Nick Setchfield**

Levinson originally intended to make a straight documentary on the impact of pollution on the real-life Chesapeake Bay.

Ray Harryhausen: Special Effects Titan

Stopmotion in the name of love

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2012 | PG | 95 minutes | £17.99 (DVD)/£19.99 (Blu-ray)

Distributor: Arrow Films

Director: Gilles Penso

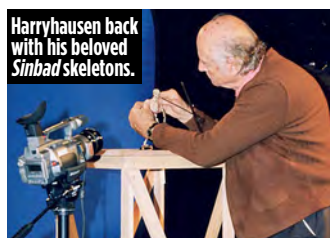
Interviewees: Ray Harryhausen, James Cameron, Peter Jackson, Guillermo del Toro, Nick Park



WHEN HE WAS

working on *Mighty Joe Young*, Ray Harryhausen ate celery and carrots to get into a gorilla mood; when he wrecked the Golden Gate Bridge in *It Came From Beneath The Sea*, local authorities expressed concern that it'd worry drivers; the angry crab in *Mysterious Island* was bought from Harrods. Just three anecdotes in a documentary that's full of them.

It's done in a no-frills fashion, taking each of the films Harryhausen worked on in turn. It focuses on the work, not the man, and the presentation is so perfunctory it's surprising it got a cinema release. One possible reason it did is the



parade of important genre directors singing his praises – although some perhaps go too far. One criticises CGI for putting a barrier between the action and the audience – what, more so than stopmotion did?!

After *Clash Of The Titans*, techniques were moving on, so Ray retired, like a typewriter salesman admitting defeat. Now we have The Ray And Diana Harryhausen Foundation to protect his legacy. And we have this film, which, while not spectacular or amazing, is an affectionate and satisfying tribute.

EXTRAS: Director/producers commentary, interview outtakes (53 minutes), deleted scenes, a featurette on Ray's LA garage (14 minutes), Q&A footage (18 minutes), classic trailers and more. **Russell Lewin**

The eyes of the Medusa in *Titans* were taken from a baby doll. Harryhausen wanted green, but could only get blue!



Paranormal Activity 4

Footage found, point lost

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2012 | 15 | 84 minutes | £19.99 (DVD)/£26.99 (Blu-ray)

Distributor: Paramount Home Entertainment

Directors: Henry Joost, Ariel Schulman

Cast: Kathryn Newton, Matt Shively, Aiden Lovekamp, Brady Allen, Stephen Dunham



HAVE HENRY

Joost and Ariel Schulman forgotten what *Paranormal Activity* is all about? At times, during this disappointing effort, it seems like it.

Boiled down to its essentials, this franchise is about making you stare at a doorway for a very long time. But *PA4* resorts to a bewildering number of jumpcuts, seemingly fearful viewers won't have the patience to wait for a character to walk across a room.

Maybe this concern about attention span is related to the film's teen focus. Young Alex (Kathryn Newton) experiences strange goings on after her family takes in a peculiar little boy from over the road. This requires that the film's grown-ups must be morons – Alex's parents steadfastly refuse to listen to their daughter's concerns. The found-footage conceit is also stretched to breaking point, as Alex sets laptops recording 24/7 throughout the house (there's even one in the kitchen, "for mum's recipes").

There's no tension, not a single bone-chilling moment, and a key revelation about one character's true identity makes zero sense. Perhaps all will be explained in *PA5*... but after watching this, you might feel inclined to swerve it.

EXTRAS: Both formats also offer an extended edit (nine minutes longer), but there are no extra scares. Twenty-eight minutes of deleted scenes prove equally pointless. **Ian Berriman**

Kathryn Newton is a talented golfer. She might have played in the Women's US Open, but couldn't cos of filming *PA4*.

THE TICK LIST

THE BEST NEW DVDS – GOT 'EM YET?

- 1 HOLY MOTORS**
Leos Carax's trip into the surreal is baffling, beguiling and beautiful. ★★★★★ ☐
- 2 RUBY SPARKS**
A writer accidentally types his ideal girlfriend into existence in this inventive film. ★★★★★ ☐
- 3 MERLIN SERIES FIVE, VOLUME ONE**
The first six episodes of the final season. Sob. ★★★★★ ☐
- 4 GAME OF THRONES SEASON TWO**
Not quite as good as the first season, but full of ambition. ★★★★★ ☐
- 5 SKYFALL**
It's not the best Bond film ever, but this intimate adventure is still pretty great. ★★★★★ ☐
- 6 ANTIVIRAL**
People pay to be injected with celebrity viruses in Brandon Cronenberg's debut. ★★★★★ ☐
- 7 MERLIN SERIES FIVE, VOLUME TWO**
The final ep feels rushed, but it's still very entertaining. ★★★★★ ☐
- 8 BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD**
Part magical-realist fairytale, part relationship drama. ★★★★★ ☐
- 9 LOOPER**
Rian Johnson's time travel tale was voted 2012's best SF film by our writers. ★★★★★ ☐
- 10 V/H/S**
This found-footage anthology film ties together five very creepy shorts. ★★★★★ ☐

THE RULES: New releases push down old releases. DVDs drop out of the chart after three months.

WOI, NO DUD?

SOMEONE RELEASE THIS!

HOLMES & YO-YO

TV SERIES | 1976-1977

This American comedy show concerned a police detective (Holmes) and his partner Yoyo, an android with super-strength, speed-reading ability, and a built-in Polaroid camera! John Schuck (*Star Trek IV* and *V*) played Yoyo, while John Astin (Gomez in *The Addams Family*) directed four of the 13 eps.



BLU-RAY DEBUT

Mario Bava

High-def horrors from Italian innovator

Black Sunday



★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1960 | 15 | 86 minutes | £22.99 (double-play Blu-ray)

Distributor: Arrow Video

Director: Mario Bava

Cast: Barbara Steele, John Richardson, Andrea Checchi, Ivo Garrani

Lisa And The Devil

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1974 | 15 | 92 minutes | £22.99 (double-play Blu-ray)

Director: Telly Savalas

Cast: Telly Savalas, Elke Sommer, Sylva Koscina, Alessio Orano, Alida Valli

MARIO BAVA WAS ONE OF

the prime movers of Italian horror cinema, and a hugely influential figure. These lovingly assembled double-play Blu-rays kick-off a series of reissues of his films.

Luminous beauty Barbara Steele has a double role in *Black Sunday* (aka *The Mask Of Satan*) playing both 19th century noblewoman Katia and Asa, a 17th century witch who returns to menace the descendants of the brother who sentenced her.

Three factors combine to make this supremely atmospheric example of cobwebbed gothic Bava's magnum opus. The chiaroscuro cinematography is glorious. The shock scenes retain their power: a moment where Asa has a spiked mask driven into her skull with a massive mallet still induces a wince over half a century on. Finally, there's a disturbing necrophiliac sizzle: as Asa's reconstituted corpse reclines on her tomb, she's

simultaneously a revolting and seductive figure.

There isn't much to the script, beyond a rote tale of vengeance from beyond the grave, and the mythology is somewhat confused – when Asa's long-dead lover turns up to keep her company, it's unclear whether he's a ghost, a zombie, a vampire or a combination of all three. But who cares when the film is so visually ravishing? You could screengrab something from every scene and hang it on your wall.

Introducing *Lisa And The Devil*, horror expert Alan Jones describes it as “a metaphysical odyssey”. Thinking that sounds suspiciously like code for “self-indulgent twaddle”? Bullseye.

Elke Sommer plays Lisa, an American tourist in Spain. Spooked by encountering a man who resembles an ancient mural's depiction of Satan (Telly Savalas) she gets lost in the back-streets. Taking a lift from some strangers, she ends up at a palatial home where Telly's the butler (uh-oh), and gets tangled up with a blind Countess and her handsome maniac of a son.

It's a film that's hysterical in more senses than one, mixing overwrought melodrama with unintentional hilarity. Life-size dummies turn into real bodies and then back again. People hold shouting matches with thin air. Lisa is haunted by strange dreams. Questions hang in the air. Is Telly the Devil? Is Lisa the reincarnation of someone's former love? Was Mario Bava sniffing Bostik when he made this?

You could hang a screengrab of every scene on your wall

The production design is impressively lavish, and Savalas is an amusing presence, especially when he's sucking a lollipop (not a crib from *Kojak* – Mario Bava thought of it first!). But while the film's surrealist non-sequiturs are sometimes intriguing, more often than not they're simply tiresome.

EXTRAS: Both films look great in high-def, though the presence of the odd black and white spot on *Black Sunday* is disappointing; still, we can't expect an expensive frame-by-frame restoration on every release.

Both releases offer a choice of variant cuts. In *Black Sunday's* case, you also get the version distributed in the States: it's redubbed, has a different score and shortens certain graphic sequences. *Lisa And The Devil's* alternate edit is even more radical: unable to sell the film, Bava retitled it *House Of Exorcism* and inserted newly-shot possession sequences, framing the original footage as Lisa's insane imaginings. It's an interesting curiosity.

Bonus-wise, *Black Sunday* comes with a well-informed commentary by Bava expert Tim Lucas – essential listening. Otherwise it's pretty slim pickings: a nine-minute interview with Barbara Steele dating from 1995, a deleted scene, a short intro, three trailers and a TV spot.

Lisa comes with different commentary tracks and intros for both versions: Tim Lucas once again shows off his staggering in-depth knowledge on the main track, while producer Alfredo Leone and Elke Sommer tackle *House Of Exorcism*. Featurette “The Exorcism Of Lisa” (25 minutes) explores the film's troubled history. You also get a deleted scene, three trailers and a radio spot. **Ian Berriman**

The scene where the witch's eyes reform themselves was done by pushing poached eggs up into the holes in a wax mask.



“Fancy a snog?”

BLU-RAY DEBUT

From Beyond

HP with added sauce

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1986 | 18 | 86 minutes | £15.99 (DVD)/£19.99 (Blu-ray)

Distributor: Second Sight

Director: Stuart Gordon

Cast: Jeffrey Combs, Barbara Crampton, Ken Foree, Ted Sorel



IF YOU NECKED

LSD and pondered microscopic parasites, this is the sort of day-glo vision which might result.

Made by the director of *Re-Animator*, this HP Lovecraft adap uses his seven-page story as a starting point – literally (it's the pre-credits teaser). After that, it's all new material.

Jeffrey Combs plays the assistant of Dr Pretorius, creator of the Resonator, a machine which stimulates the pineal gland, smashing the limits of perception. Other-dimensional creatures resembling eels and jellyfish float in the air... and once you can see them, they can see you.

Bizarro body-horror's the focus, as Pretorius returns “from beyond” as a ghastly mass of twisted flesh (the FX still impress). *The Thing* was clearly an influence, but *From Beyond* recalls the kinkier avenues of David Cronenberg's career too.

The film has limited horizons and sets out its stall too early, but if you have a strong stomach it's all sorts of sicko, shiversome fun. Bad trip, good movie.

EXTRAS: An immaculate print (which reintegrates “strong” footage cut from the theatrical release) comes with 71 minutes of all-new featurettes: talking heads with the director, writer, effects guys and Barbara Crampton. Six further bonuses come from 2007's region one DVD: a good-humoured commentary by the director, the two leads and producer Brian Yuzna; 20 minutes of interviews/featurettes; a gallery. **Ian Berriman**

Another cut scene (which remains lost), featured S&M enthusiast Dr Pretorius driving a nail through a woman's tongue.



Some of Deirdre's coffee mornings were better than others.

Frankenweenie

Is it alive? IS IT ALIVE?

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2012 | PG | 83 minutes | £17.99 (DVD)/£21.99 (Blu-ray)/£28.99 (Blu-ray 3D)

Distributor: Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment
Director: Tim Burton

Cast: Catherine O'Hara, Martin Short, Charlie Tahan, Winona Ryder



LESS THAN A

minute into Tim Burton's latest wide-eyed creation – based on his 1984 live-action film of the same name – as the credits swoop darkly over, a single sentence appears: “Based on an original idea by Tim Burton”. But if there's one thing that the entirely charming *Frankenweenie* is not, it's original.

The story practically writes itself: a young boy (Victor Frankenstein) loses his dog Sparky in a tragic baseball accident, decides to reanimate him, and delightful chaos ensues. But Burton's creation isn't so much a film as a series of homages to beloved classics, from *Bride Of Frankenstein* to Hammer's *Dracula* to *Gamera*. Barely a stopmotion scene passes without a sly nod to a



Something was definitely dodgy at Crufts.

genre staple, all jostling for a place in Burton's trademark black and white, tight-faced world.

With the attention firmly on filmmaking past, the present seems rather under-cooked, with no real attention paid to the characters or their place in this replay of horror's finest. The plot zips by with little impact and it's rather thin for those who don't know the back-catalogue. It's a patchwork monster alright, but it's difficult to tell whether there's any real life behind the sparks.

EXTRAS: On DVD, just a featurette on a touring exhibit and a music video. The Blu-ray (rated) adds short *Captain Sparky Vs The Flying Saucers* (three mins), plus a Making Of and the original 1984 short (30 minutes). **Natasha Hodgson**

! The mechanics of Sparky the dog were so small that the filmmakers had to get Swiss watchmakers to make some of the parts.

Oblivion Island

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 25 March

2009 | 12 | 99 minutes | £19.99 (DVD)/£24.99 (Double-play Blu-ray)



HOT ON THE

heels of *Journey To Agartha*, here's another anime family fantasy, though this one's very much for little 'uns. Unusually for anime, it's made in CGI. A girl tumbles down to the fantastical Oblivion Island, whose denizens gather forgotten objects, ruled by a masked Baron who covets the girl's lost mirror.

For adults, the multi-coloured island is rather gaudy and the CGI decidedly limited. Even the more pleasing ideas, like a lake of “lava” which turns out to be syrup, don't add up to much. The story's rather plodding, though the action perks up considerably in the finale, and the moral payoff is surprisingly sweet. Still, young kids could well be hooked by the film – though tots might be upset by the tragic fate of a cute character.

EXTRAS: A Making Of; promo material. **Andrew Osmond**

The Fallow Field

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2009 | 18 | 92 minutes | £12.99



IN THIS SEMI-

professional British horror, a man wakes in a field with no memory of how he got there, then ambles home to his wife. But he can't stay away from the countryside, and soon returns to meet someone with an unusual supernatural power who may give him some answers. Not very nice ones...

The Fallow Field starts as intriguing, switches to irritating, and then becomes boring. Its structure is unusual – and flawed. After a short while it becomes a two-hander in a confined and unreal setting. The things that need to shine to make it work – performances and an atmosphere of menace – fall short: in particular, the leading man is a real wet blanket.

EXTRAS: Commentary by the director and producer, a Making Of (15 minutes), trailer and stills gallery. **Russell Lewin**

The Corridor

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2010 | 18 | 95 minutes | £12.99 (DVD)/£15.99 (Blu-ray)



Q. YOU'RE GOING

to visit an old friend who's suffered a psychotic episode; last time you saw him, he stabbed you in the face. Where do you arrange to meet? A) Somewhere busy and public – a café or pub? Or B) his dead mother's cabin, out in the middle of nowhere?

Did you pick B)? No, of course you didn't. But bad horror movies rely on characters making bad decisions, so *The Corridor* packs its gang of ageing losers off to the woods to settle their differences.

Before the crying and hugging can start, though, the supernatural intervenes, and the trip becomes a bloodbath. And since the filmmakers are apparently no better at decision-making than their characters, everything is played painfully straight – which makes this a tedious film, as well as a stupid one.

EXTRAS: None. **Sarah Dobbs**

The Race Is On

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1957-1978 | PG | 176 minutes | £18.99



The Children's Film Foundation, as readers of a greying vintage will remember, made hour-long mini-

movies for the under-15s in an age before round-the-clock kids' telly. To '60s and '70s eyes, they were insanely cinematic. But time is cruel, and, with a few exceptions, they now look fatally amateur hour.

This second BFI collection features three CFF films, of which the one of most interest to SF fans is *Sammy's Super T-Shirt*. Made at the fag-end of the Foundation's 30-year life, it's essentially a *Whizzer & Chips* idea about a magic t-shirt which gives its wearer special powers, stretched out to a painful 55 minutes. There's an initial nostalgia blast, but it's not enough, and Sammy's sub-Steve Austin heroics rapidly become tiresome.

EXTRAS: An illustrated booklet featuring essays. **Steve O'Brien**

coming soon

25 MARCH

RISE OF THE GUARDIANS Santa, the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny, the Sandman and Jack Frost team up in this animated adventure.

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT

A Blu-ray release for the groundbreaking 1988 fantasy comedy.

1 APRIL

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE SEASON ONE

Jonathan Archer's NX-01 warps onto Blu-ray.

PRIMEVAL: NEW WORLD SEASON ONE

Eleven episodes of the Canadian spin-off from the British dino-drama.

TOUCH: SEASON ONE

Kiefer Sutherland plays the father of a boy who can predict the future.

SPACE PRECINCT: LEGACY

A feature-length documentary about Gerry Anderson's short-lived live-action TV series.

NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN

A 30th anniversary Blu-ray edition of the “unofficial” Bond film.

8 APRIL

THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Peter Jackson makes a slightly underwhelming return to Middle-earth.

BEING HUMAN SERIES FIVE

The final six episodes of the vampire/werewolf/ghost house-share show. Sniff. We'll miss you, guys.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN: SPIDER-TECH

Half a dozen episodes of the latest Spidey animated series.

THE HOUSE IN NIGHTMARE PARK

Frankie Howard stars in this “Old Dark House” horror-comedy from 1973.

22 APRIL

JOURNEYMAN All 13 episodes of the 2007 show about a reporter who involuntarily jumps backwards in time.

29 APRIL

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION SEASON THREE

The year where *Next Gen* really hit its stride comes to Blu-ray. Classic two-parter “The Best Of Both Worlds” is also getting a standalone release.

29 APRIL

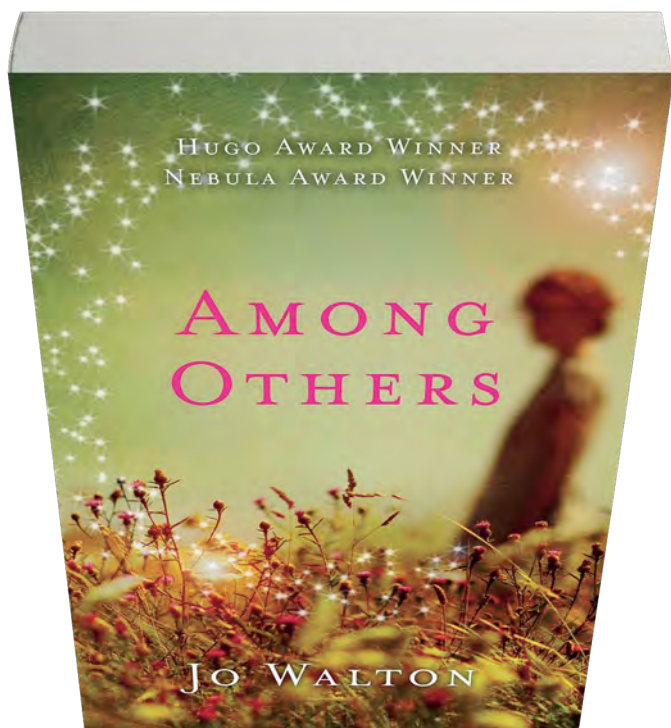
LIFE OF PI Age Lee's adaptation of the Yann Martel fantasy novel.

BLACK SABBATH Boris Karloff is one of the stars of Mario Bava's three-part horror anthology film from 1963.

BARON BLOOD Joseph Cotton resurrects an evil Austrian ancestor in this 1972 Mario Bava horror.

13 MAY

MOTEL HELL A double-play Blu-ray of the 1980 horror about a farmer who buries his victims up to their necks.



Among Others

For the love of books

★★★★★

Release Date: 21 March

416 pages | £7.99

Author: Jo Walton

Publisher: Corsair

IN 1967, FRENCH LITERARY

critic Roland Barthes – we realise this sounds like the most pretentious way to start a review ever, but do bear with us – wrote an essay entitled “Death Of The Author”. In it, he argued that what a story is “about” is determined by its audience, not its writer. Books can have as many meanings as they do readers, because everyone brings different experiences and ideas to what they read, and sees different things in the text. Put another way, one person’s science fiction really is another person’s thriller that just happens to be set in the future and involve people shooting each other with ray-guns.

This is pertinent to Jo Walton’s ninth novel more than most books that get reviewed in these pages. First published in the US in 2010, *Among Others* first made it to these shores late last year with a hardback edition designed to deter imports

which quietly sneaked out with no fanfare, but is now getting the big publicity push for its paperback edition. It’s been garlanded with awards by SF fans and professionals alike: it got the Hugo from members of the annual World Science Fiction Convention, and the Nebula from the Science Fiction Writers of America. Yet it’s been praised – and criticised – for all sorts of contrasting reasons, as if everyone’s been reading subtly different versions of the book.

It’s charmed many as a love song to reading – in particular, to that immersive, all-consuming, book-a-day reading many of us did as children. Anyone who ever heard an exasperated parent tell them to Put That Book Down And Go Play Outside will be able to relate to 15-year-old Morwenna’s journeys of delight and discovery through the pages of Le Guin, Delany, McCaffrey and Tiptree. So too will anyone for whom reading was a form of escape from more difficult relationships with their family; “I can bear anything as long as there are books”, says Morwenna, who narrates the novel via a diary she keeps after running away from home.

For other readers, this is the story of an awkward teenager finally finding people she has stuff in common with – namely SF fandom. Just as Morwenna is beginning to despair that she will never fit in as the new kid at a posh English boarding school far from the Welsh valleys where she grew up, she’s invited to join a book group at the town library. Suddenly she’s blossoming: holding forth about her favourite books among fellow readers who take her views seriously, being introduced to Dave Langford’s fanzine *Ansible*, and learning about these wondrous events called “conventions” where people get together to talk about SF for days at a time. Ace!

But *Among Others* tells other

A coming of age tale refreshingly frank about the fact that it isn’t only teenage boys who get horny

types of stories, too. It’s a coming-of-age tale that is refreshingly frank about the fact that it isn’t only teenage boys who get horny (although in the process it suggests that taking Robert Heinlein as your role model on sex is a touch unwise); it’s also a fantasy, in which a girl talks to fairies, brings down a polluting factory with magic, and has an evil witch for a mother.

It’s in the latter area that it’s at its least satisfying: the fairies are interesting but their role in the story is cursory, the villain is barely even a character sketch, and the climactic magical showdown falls flat. Yet Walton leaves things open enough that it’s possible to see the “magic” as the product of an over-heated teen imagination, and a harmful one at that. (We only see Morwenna’s side of things: how evil is her mother really?)

It seems an odd thing to suggest in an *SFX* review, but the fantasy elements work best when seen as metaphors for the troubled past Morwenna is trying to leave behind.

Or that, at least, is one way to read it... **Nic Clarke**

✎ Corsair have also just re-issued Jo Walton’s *Tooth And Claw*, which won the World Fantasy award in 2004.



Dreams And Shadows

Sinister writer does fairy scary

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

448 pages | £14.99 (hardback)/£7.99 (ebook)

Author: C Robert Cargill

Publisher: Gollancz

A CHANGELING CHILD

drives its mother to suicide; a fallen Djinn grants a double-edged wish to a neglected boy; a water “Nixie” unwittingly opens the gates of hell; *Sinister* co-writer C Robert Cargill’s dark debut novel is an ambitious tapestry of folklore set against the modern world, a bloodthirsty, supernatural Boy’s Own adventure.

Our heroes are brave young Ewan, stolen as a baby and initiated into the magical “Limestone Kingdom”, and Colby, granted a wish by the mysterious Yashtar to “see everything”. Cargill’s language is deceptively simple, avoiding cliché though fittingly awe-filled as he shows readers the wonders (and horrors) of the universe through the eyes of a child.

Playful and never pretentious, Cargill also splices in chapters from Dr Thaddeus Ray, an expert on “dreamfolk” who concisely explains the nature and characteristics of different beings as we encounter them, leaving the main narrative free to bound forth without the shackles of tiresome exposition. Even Ray, though, is more than just a device, becoming as much a part of the story as the myriad other intricately drawn incidental characters. For a first novel it’s phenomenal. Deliciously moreish, expect *Dreams And Shadows* to become modern horror fantasy legend and Cargill’s lore to soar. **Rosie Fletcher**

✎ Cargill has two movie projects in development: SF actioner *When Gravity Fails* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

The Grim Company

Grim by name, grim by nature

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

452 pages | £16.99 (hardback)/£6.86 (ebook)

Author: Luke Scull

Publisher: Head Of Zeus

THE HOBBIT MAY HAVE

begun its three-film voyage across cinema screens, but literary fantasy is still shying away from the Tolkienesque in favour of dark grittiness. The latest book to follow in *Game Of Thrones*'s monstrously successful wake (although also owing a massive debt to Joe Abercrombie) is *The Grim Company*.

Set in a world where humanity murdered their gods, the story follows the chaos that's unleashed when one of the few remaining mages wipes out an entire city. Soon the delicate balance between various corrupt city-states is crumbling, and a motley gang of barbarians, alchemists and scoundrels are dragged into the resulting conflict.

Debut author Luke Scull packs an impressive amount of violence, hazy morality and betrayal into these



pages, crafting an energetically cynical read. Showcasing thrilling action sequences alongside effective plot twists, it'll please fans of the darker edges of epic fantasy, although it's not without its flaws.

Biggest of the lot is that Scull's prose style echoes Joe Abercrombie's so much that the book ends up lacking an identity of its own, while the plotting is a tad predictable and the characterisation occasionally stumbles. Scull has still pulled off an entertaining page-turner, but it'll be interesting to see what he's capable of once he steps out of the shadow of his influences. **Saxon Bullock**

? Scull also works in computer game design. His latest project is the iOS roleplaying game *The Shadow Sun*, out soon.

Seoul Survivors

Hammer time

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

448 pages | £12.99 (paperback)/£11.64 (ebook)

Author: Naomi Foyle

Publisher: Jo Fletcher Books

WHILE GENRE FICTION HAS

a history of cover art featuring improbably well-endowed and scantily-clad ladies, by and large the stories themselves have been coy when it comes to depicting actual sex. Which may be a blessing: as the Bad Sex Award demonstrates annually, writing sex is one thing; writing sex that doesn't make your readers laugh (or wince) is another.

Naomi Foyle's debut tries to walk this tightrope. Sometimes it succeeds: bits of the sex are fun, if not exactly erotic; others are grim, but in ways that reveal characterisation. Sometimes it wobbles: one sequence doesn't so much defy good taste as stomp it into pieces so tiny they couldn't be detected with a microscope. Sometimes it pitches head-first off the tightrope and lands in an undignified heap of moist panties and hilariously over-described genitalia.



It's not *all* sex – although at times it feels that way. Set in a near-future much like the present, only louder and with fewer civil liberties, the novel follows a handful of ex-pats and refugees through the seedier side of South Korean life as an asteroid, Lucifer's Hammer, hurtles towards Earth. Foyle is effective at building tension and creating villainy all the more sinister for its well-meaning smile; she also portrays an abusive relationship smartly and (mostly) sensitively. But towards the end the sexual violence starts to overwhelm the more interesting stuff. **Nic Clarke**

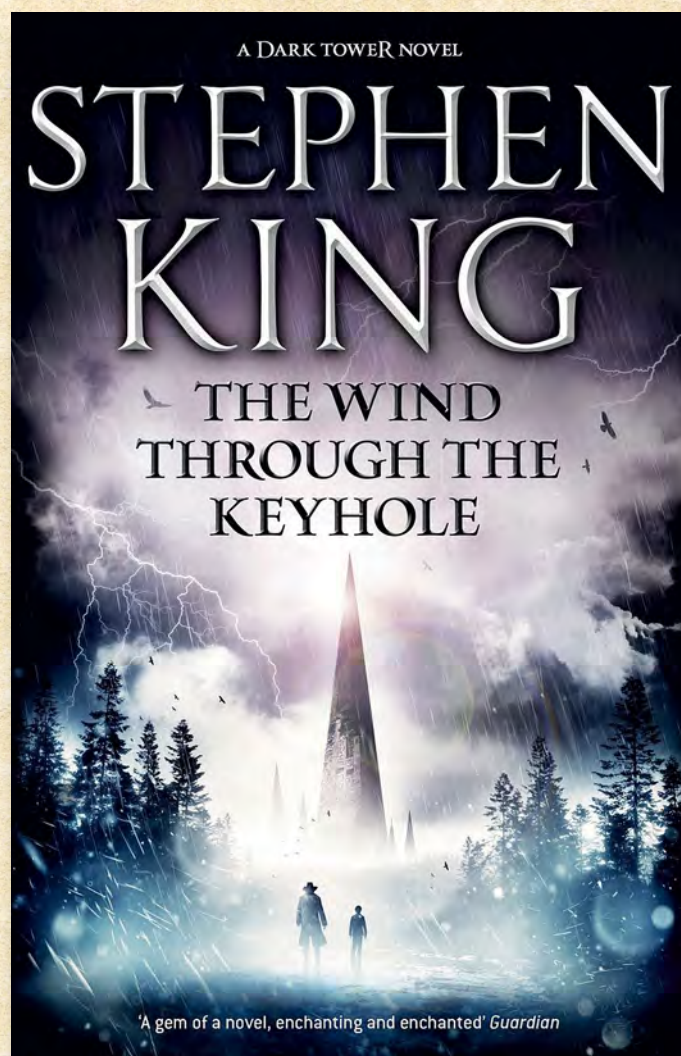
? "Seoul Survivors" is also the name of a (primarily ex-pat) rugby team in South Korea, founded in the '70s.

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Fringe: September's Notebook

So gorgeous your eyes may actually pop out

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

192 pages | £28.99

Authors: Tara Bennett, Paul Terry

Publisher: Titan Books

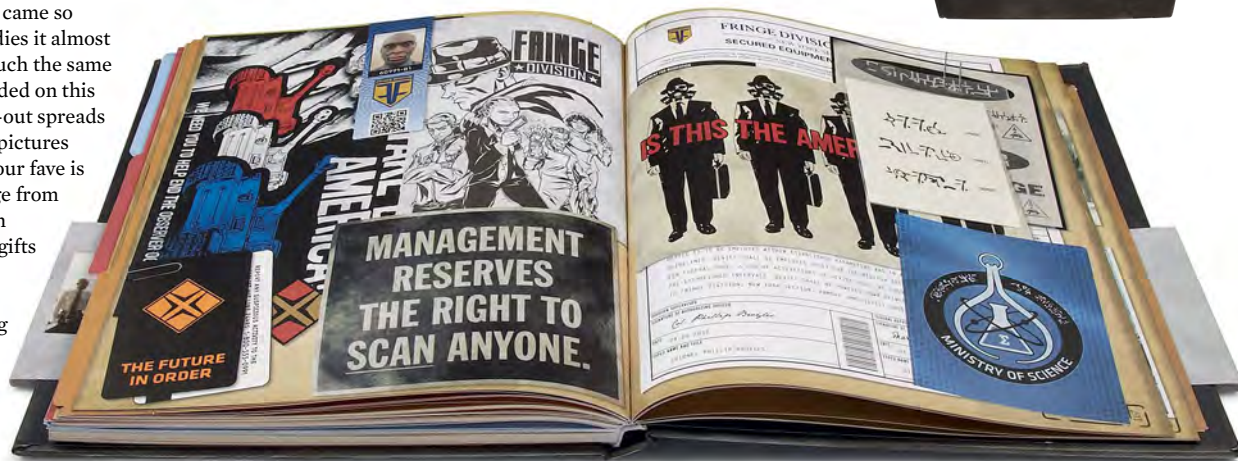
TITAN BOOKS ARE SPOILING

us. A few months ago they brought out *The Essential Supernatural*, a coffee table book that came so jam-packed with goodies it almost burst at the seams. Much the same effort has been expended on this *Fringe* title, from fold-out spreads to "case file" cards to pictures suitable for framing (our fave is the "Resist" Etta image from the final season). Even pages that don't have gifts appear to be three-dimensional – you'll catch yourself running a finger down them to check nothing folds out or comes off. It a *Fringe* fan's dream come true.

The book's written from the perspective of Observer September, collating everything we saw across five seasons into his notes. The authors have caught his essence (innocent and fascinated) and it's nice to imagine he's really talking, but the designers have stolen the thunder from all the text, simply by

putting together such a gloriously visual treat. In fact, there's only one thing wrong with this book: now we've seen it (and its *Supernatural* equivalent), we want one for every show now airing. **Jayne Nelson**

Also included are three Observer tattoos to slap on your face. Translated, they say: "Heed", "Obey" and "Serve".



Tales Of Majipoor

Short tales from a big planet

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

320 pages | £20 (hardback)/£7.99 (ebook)

Author: Robert Silverberg

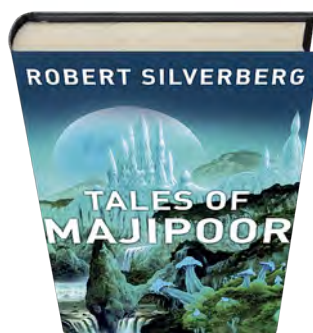
Publisher: Gollancz

EVEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT

of a remarkable career, Robert Silverberg's Majipoor books stand out as key works. Set on a vast planet, the Majipoor sequence fuses elements of sci-fi with high fantasy. While humans and other alien races have settled the planet, and there are plenty of references to advanced technology, most inhabitants now live a peasant lifestyle.

It's fertile territory for shorter fiction, and down the years Silverberg has used the form to explore elements of life on Majipoor outside the novels set on the planet. Inevitably, even in the digital age, such stories end up being fiddly to track down for fans, hence this new collection of seven stories (all of them previously published elsewhere).

Silverberg is steeped in the magazine tradition, adept at grabbing a readership quickly – even when his core material may seem



unpromising. "The Book Of Changes", for example, is essentially about a noble, Furvain, composing an epic poem. It's both a reflection on the writing process and an enthralling tale of someone caught up in extraordinary circumstances.

Elsewhere, there's more on the career of Lord Stiamot, scourge of Majipoor's shapeshifters, weird archaeology and even a sort of love story. Throughout, the writing is enviably direct without sacrificing atmospherics or characterisation. Minor by Silverberg's standards, but a minor masterclass nonetheless. **Jonathan Wright**

Silverberg says he won't be writing any more Majipoor trilogies. "I'd be in my eighties by the time I finished..."

The Quickening

Hammer does holiday reading

★★★★★

Release Date: 28 March

274 pages | £9.99

Author: Julie Myerson

Publisher: Hammer

YOU HAVE TO READ RIGHT

to the very end of ex-Guardian columnist Julie Myerson's horror novella *The Quickening* before you can be certain it's not great.

Like any compelling mystery, this sub-*Rosemary's Baby* tale of pregnant and paranoid Rachel, honeymooning with her husband Dan on a luxury Caribbean island rife with secrets, keeps you guessing. Has Dan been to the island before, and why would he lie if he has? Is he trying to harm Rachel? Or is Rachel losing her mind? And who's that strange ghostly figure on the beach?

While the answers to these questions are ultimately banal there's something to be said for the ride. Eschewing speech punctuation, Myerson moves at quite a pace, throwing twists and cliffhangers at the reader hard and fast. Rachel and Dan may be insufferable and unconvincing as a



couple, but you never lose the sense that there's a reason – that there's something more going on.

There is, it's just something clumsy and derivative, as the author lobs voodoo in with ghosts, and a revenge tale with a relationship melodrama, none of which truly stand up to scrutiny.

The Quickening comes from the publishing imprint of Hammer and is a story which would have sat nicely as a segment in TV horror anthology *Hammer House Of Horror* – entertaining, if throwaway, delivered over 50 minutes. As a novel it's too slight. **Rosie Fletcher**

Julie Myerson had a much publicised rift with her 17-year-old son. She wrote about it in *The Lost Child: A True Story*.

The City Of Silk And Steel

A woman's world?

★★★★★

Release Date: 21 March

541 pages | £12.99 (paperback)/£7.99 (ebook)

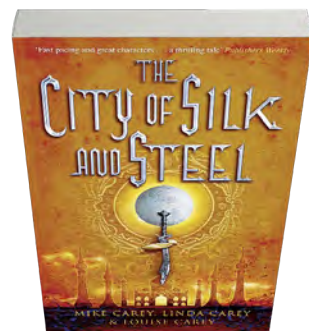
Authors: Mike Carey, Linda Carey, Louise Carey

Publisher: Gollancz

HUSBAND AND WIFE

writing teams seem quite common now, but it's rarer to see a husband, wife and daughter creating a book together. Mike Carey is famous as the author of the Felix Castor novels; Linda and Louise, though less well-known, are also published authors. This is the first time they've all worked together though, and it's a collaboration that works well.

The novel centres around the mystical "city of women", a legend which we then see the birth of. When Bessa's sultan is deposed and ascetics take over the city, his seraglio of concubines (along with their children) are sent into the desert. Condemned to die, the women instead overpower their captors, and begin to create a new life for themselves. Eventually, though, they will return to Bessa,



and bring their ideas of a more equal society to life.

It's impossible to not be aware of various flaws in the storyline while reading this – things go improbably well for the women at each turn, and history shows that overnight conversions from dictatorship to democracy rarely go smoothly. Ultimately, though, you're likely to care less about these issues than about the many characters – the assassin Zuleika, wise Gursoun, stubborn Intisar – and their struggles. A captivating book that carries you along on an entertaining journey. **Rhian Drinkwater**

Mike Carey's latest projects include "a horror novel with zombies in it... sort of", and a movie screenplay called *Dominion*.

Gideon's Angel

Cavaliers vs Demons, anyone?

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

302 pages | £7.99

Author: Clifford Beal

Publisher: Solaris

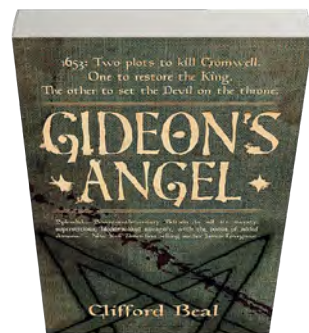
BE CAREFUL WHEN YOU

first crack the spine on supernatural Civil War romp *Gideon's Angel* – you'll be thrown face first into a vividly described sword fight, which is as savage as it is intense.

Then, before you've had a chance to catch your breath, you'll be pulled by the hand into a saucy mistress's bed, before being chucked into a swashbuckling rescue mission, with d'Artagnan the Musketeer fighting by your side.

This breakneck pace continues for the first third of the book, with each fresh chapter a new adventure. We follow Cavalier hero Richard Treadwell's journey from England to France and back again, as he becomes tangled up in a plot first to kill Cromwell, and then to raise the Devil himself.

The pace eventually starts to slow, but the more sequential narrative shift is timed perfectly



with the introduction of villain Gideon Fludd, whose dastardly deeds are worth savouring.

It's not perfect – there are moments when *Gideon's Angel* feels more like a film script than a piece of literature, but who cares when it's this entertaining?

Let's hope that Clifford Beal waits until the invention of time travel before he signs over the rights, so that the book can be beamed back to the '70s, to the studios of Hammer or Amicus, where it rightfully belongs. Exciting, violent, and occasionally incredibly cheesy, this is as fun as fiction gets. **Sam Ashurst**

It's no wonder the swordplay is so expertly described; Beal's hobby is 17th century rapier and dagger fighting. En garde!

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Juliet Marillier

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ISBN 978 0 85766 289 7



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Doctor Who: The Nameless City

The Return Of The Archons

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

45 pages | £1.99

Author: Michael Scott

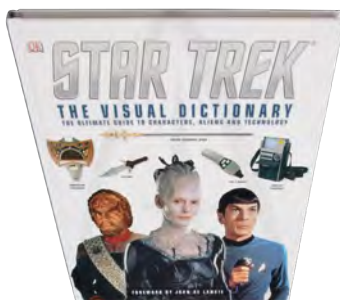
Publisher: Penguin Books

THE LATEST WHO EBOOK

mixes the Lovecraftian and the ludicrous. After Second Doctor companion Jamie's given a copy of the dreaded Necronomicon, the TARDIS is hurled to the Nameless City, home of the Archons, an aeons-old race of Lovecraftian beings. With its black glass pyramids and whiff of sulphur, it's a bloodcurdlingly ominous setting.

Michael Scott clearly knows his *Who* continuity extremely well. Sadly, come the end, he seems to be channeling the silly *TV Comic* strips of the '60s – the way the Doctor defeats this ghastly menace is plain daft. This gear shift makes for an exasperating conclusion to a story which had previously built an impressively crepuscular atmosphere. **Ian Berriman**

Michael Scott is best known for his bestselling YA fantasy series, *The Secrets Of The Immortal Nicholas Flamel*.



Star Trek: The Visual Dictionary

Picard and pals in pretty pics

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

95 pages | £14.99

Author: Paul Ruditis

Publisher: Dorling Kindersley

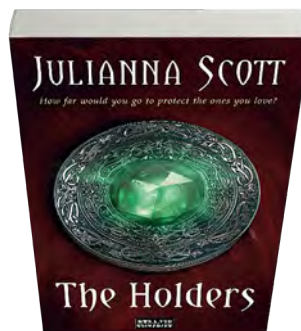
WITH INTO DARKNESS'S

arrival imminent, this picture book provides a good way to get up to speed on decades of continuity.

Covering the whole franchise, it itemises all the major races, vessels and conflicts, mostly in lavish spreads. There's only about an hour and a half's reading here, but then you don't buy a Dorling Kindersley book for the text. It's beautifully illustrated, with clever use of cutouts: for example, the profile of Picard is scattered with artefacts like his Ressikan flute.

Hardcore fans will know it all already, and with vocabulary like "savant" and "polyamorous" it's certainly not aimed at kids. Ideal for a teenage *Trek* fan hooked by the Abrams movie who'd like to learn more. **Ian Berriman**

Paul Ruditis's other *Trek* books include a guide to *Voyager*. He used to work as a tour guide at Paramount Pictures.



The Holders

Hogwarts in Ireland

★★★★★

Release Date: 7 March

361 pages | £7.99

Author: Julianna Scott

Publisher: Strange Chemistry

THIS DEBUT YA BOOK HAS

good writing and characters, but is stymied by an overwritten romance and a plot that's barely begun after 300-odd pages.

Seventeen-year-old Becca, the narrator, fiercely defends her kid brother Ryland, who's plagued by voices in his head. She reluctantly accompanies him to a boarding school, headed by their long-lost father, and magic ensues.

This series has plenty of promise, but little's delivered so far. Becca and her love interest are introduced well enough, but become less interesting as their romance heats up, drenched in dewy-eyed declarations of admiration. Despite a few solid story developments, the book's sketchy villains don't temper the excessive fantasy wish-fulfilment.

Miriam McDonald

One of the book's concepts is "Anam", Gaelic for soul, although here its meaning is closer to "romantic other half".



Pantomime

Runaway girl becomes circus boy

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

400 pages | £7.99

Author: Laura Lam

Publisher: Strange Chemistry

PANTOMIME BEGINS WITH

a street urchin, Micah Grey, trying to join a circus. As the narrative moves forward, it also flicks back to "his" earlier life as Iphigenia Laurus, daughter of a noble family.

The archipelago setting feels like a mishmash of fantasy stereotypes, with the main island of Ellada having a vaguely Victorian aristocracy and colonising the other, hotter islands. This is disappointing.

However, with its runaways, girl in boys' clothing (or vice versa) and Punch and Judy-like circus managers there's something genuinely pantomimic about the story, and Micah/Gene is a much more subtle creation. You'll work out early on what's special about her, but Lam handles it sensitively, creating a truly touching lead character. **Miriam McDonald**

Lam originally conceived Micah as an adult, and wrote most of a "grown-up" novel that way before getting sick.

PAPERBACK REISSUES

DOCTOR WHO REISSUES

Release Date: 7 March

£7.99 each

Publisher: BBC Books



BBC Books are celebrating *Who*'s 50th anniversary by reissuing eleven of their back catalogue titles (one adventure for each Doctor) in stylish new covers. The list in full (deep breath): *Ten Little Aliens*, *Dreams Of Empire*, *Last Of The Gaderene* (by Mark Gatiss), *Festival Of Death*, *Fear Of The Dark*, *Players*, *Remembrance Of The Daleks*, *EarthWorld*, *Only Human* (by Gareth Roberts), *Beautiful Chaos* and *The Silent Stars Go By*.

THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY

Release Date: 14 March

£8.99 | Author: Sheri S Tepper

Publisher: Gollancz



First published in 1987, this SF Masterworks release is set in a 23rd century where the USA has split into several states. Heroine Stavia lives in a matriarchy called Women's Country, where men live outside the walled cities in warrior encampments. Eugenics is a major theme: male aggression is being bred out and so, controversially, is homosexuality.

INTRUSION

★★★★★

Release Date: 7 March

£7.99 | Author: Ken MacLeod

Publisher: Orbit



This dystopia is set in a near-future where a single pill taken during pregnancy can prevent genetic disease. When one expectant mother refuses to take it, her freedoms are viciously curtailed. **We said:** "A finely-tuned, in-your-face argument of a novel that will annoy just about every reader... whichever end of the political spectrum you fall, MacLeod will push your buttons."

SOME KIND OF FAIRY TALE

★★★★★

Release Date: 14 March

£7.99 | Author: Graham Joyce

Publisher: Gollancz



A girl who went missing as a teenager returns to her parents' house nearly 20 years later looking barely any older, and claiming that for her only six months have passed. **We said:** "Full of engaging characters, moments of beautiful prose, and Joyce's trademark ability to evoke the magic in the countryside, it's a beguiling and deceptively complex tale."

THE WIND THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

£7.99 | Author: Stephen King

Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton



Set between the fourth and fifth volumes of the Dark Tower sequence, this latest entry can be read as a standalone. The framing device sees Roland Deschain tell a story of his young manhood. **We said:** "The structure's dangerously close to tricksy, but even a comparatively minor King novel has elegance."

Blood Of Asaheim

Wolves in spaaaaaaace

★★★★★

Release Date: April

320 pages | £17.99

Author: Chris Wraight

Publisher: The Black Library

AH, THE SPACE WOLVES.

Feral warrior kings of Fenris, sons of Leman Russ, and pretty much everyone's favourite Space Marine chapter. If there are two things every boy loves it's mighty warriors and wolves. So mixing them together in one snarling, power-armoured package is a recipe almost guaranteed for success. Not only are the Space Wolves among the most legendary chapter in the Imperium of Man, they are also legendarily difficult to paint, requiring a rather nifty blending technique to get their miniature metal bodies looking suitably wolflike.

Ingvar and Gunnlager are Grey Hunters, senior warriors in the chapter, and former members of the Deathwatch. After five decades apart they're reunited to defend a vital shrine world against the forces of chaos, and themselves from the pious Sisters of Battle, who



can't wait to get their hands on the hardened warriors.

Chris Wraight taps out a remarkably uptempo beat for *Blood Of Asaheim*, creating an adventure that's high paced even for a *Warhammer 40,000* novel. There's a pleasing brotherly bond between the two heroes, and some snappy dialogue. There is also much bearing of fangs, rending of pelts, and general spilling of wolf-related metaphors all over the place to drive home the point that this is a Space Wolf adventure. It's all remarkably good fun and a promising start to a new series. **Damien Walter**

Attention, Bristolians! Chris Wraight will be doing a signing at Games Workshop's Cribbs Causeway store on 23 March.

Between Two Thorns

Here, there and in-between

★★★★★

Release Date: 7 March

378 pages | £9.99

Author: Emma Newman

Publisher: Angry Robot

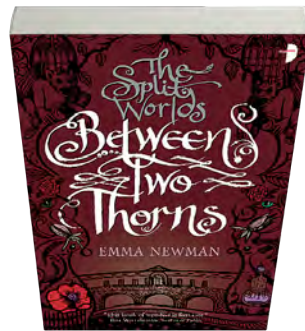
THIS MAY BE THE FIRST

novel set in the "Split Worlds", but Emma Newman has been writing prolifically about her tripartite fantasy world for some time now. Throughout 2011 she wrote and distributed a Split Worlds short story via the net every week.

In Newman's universe, there are three worlds: ours (Mundanus), Exillium (where the Fae live) and the "Nether" in-between – a mirror of our world, where an indolent bunch of Jane Austen cosplayers live (okay, it's more complicated than that).

There are also sorcerers and Arbiters, who look after the worlds like some supernatural secret police. The plot kicks off when a Nether girl who prefers Mundanus runs for it, causing outrage in polite society...

It's all light, fluffy fun, relentlessly plot-driven and full of



quirky, intriguing characters. The fact that the Nether heroine, Cathy, is a Mundanus fan means there's lots of pleasingly geeky references.

But Newman sells herself short by remaining resolutely vague about the details of this shared universe. How the worlds inter-relate, how the rules work and how characters regard each other are drip-fed, and while it's great she's not treating her readers like idiots with lengthy infodumps, this leaves her universe frustratingly nebulous and sketchily-defined at times. Maybe it makes more sense if you've read all of the short stories? **Dave Golder**

As well as being an author, Emma Newman is also a professional audio book narrator, – see enewman.co.uk for her rates!



The Disestablishment Of Paradise

Funky eco-fantasy

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

528 pages | £14.99 (paperback)/£7.99 (ebook)

Author: Phillip Mann

Publisher: Gollancz

HERE'S A BIG HAIRY

eco-fantasy, set on the colony world of Paradise. Generations of humans have lived on the verdant planet, but the economists have decided it's unviable and order everyone to leave. Female science director Hera is humiliated, but gets the chance to stay behind alone a bit longer – at which point Paradise gets interesting...

The funky eco-system is the main hook. The planet's life seems to be all plant-based, including fearsome Reapers; Tattersall weeds like Triffids; and the supposedly extinct Dendron, walking titans with the presence of HG Wells's fighting machines. One of the book's best ideas is to tuck legends and lore about Paradise into its back pages, to be dipped into whenever you want.

Hera gains a male companion as Mann deals with love, sex and spirituality, generally with aplomb. His vision is admirable, though admittedly long-winded – midway through the book, the humans engage in a bit of alien midwifery, which is crazy and awesome but goes on and on. Hard SF fans will be alienated by quasi-magical plot devices and a denouement which echoes CS Lewis's religious space fantasies (though with added sex!). But the vision is well worth the journey, even if you may be tempted to skim some bits of it.

Andrew Osmond

The real environment which most influenced Mann as a child was the North Yorkshire Moors.

THE TICK LIST

THE BEST NEW BOOKS – GOT 'EM YET?

- 1 THE EXPLORER**
Following the sole survivor of a long-distance vessel, James Smythe's book homages 2007. ★★★★★ ☐
- 2 THE ROOK**
A mind-wiped woman discovers a past working for the government dealing with all things magical. ★★★★★ ☐
- 3 THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS**
Karen Lord explores how a society responds to near-annihilation. ★★★★★ ☐
- 4 BEDLAM**
An ordinary guy finds himself inside a computer game in Christopher Brookmyre's book. ★★★★★ ☐
- 5 THE EMPEROR OF ALL THINGS**
Eldritch clocks feature in this 18th century alternate history. ★★★★★ ☐
- 6 ADAM ROBOTS**
Twenty-four short stories by Adam Roberts. ★★★★★ ☐
- 7 A MEMORY OF LIGHT**
Robert Jordan's Wheel Of Time saga finally comes to a conclusion. ★★★★★ ☐
- 8 OSIRIS**
This floating-city dystopia focuses on a spoiled girl from a wealthy family. ★★★★★ ☐
- 9 DOCTOR WHO: A BIG HAND FOR THE DOCTOR**
Eoin Colfer's irreverent ebook. ★★★★★ ☐
- 10 AGATHA H AND THE AIRSHIP CITY**
A YA adap of steampunk comic Girl Genius. ★★★★★ ☐

THE RULES: New releases push down old releases. Books drop out of the chart after three months.

GULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: HYRULE HISTORIA

Release Date: OUT NOW!

276 pages | £25.99 | Publisher: Dark Horse

Editor: Patrick Thorpe

- A history of the *Legend Of Zelda* videogame series in lovely hardback art-book form.
- Features the first official canon timeline, a manga strip and a foreword/afterword by Shigeru Miyamoto and Eiji Aonuma.
- Not a complete history – it omits the CDi games and animated series, for example.
- Incredible value for money, but already a rarity. Buy before it's going for silly money on eBay!



BOOK CLUB 86

The Princess Bride

William Goldman, 1973

Suzanne McLeod revisits an offbeat fantasy yarn

THE PRINCESS BRIDE – FIRST

published 40 years ago – reads as fresh as any of its more modern contemporaries. As one of the first fantasy books to combine edgy, ironic humour along with the action and romance (something that is often the norm now) it's been massively influential and is a true classic.

In the story, the Beautiful Heroine, Buttercup, finds her True Love, Westley the farm boy, then loses him (Westley sails off to make his fortune and runs afoul of the Dread Pirate Roberts), so the devastated Buttercup agrees to marry the Handsome Prince Humperdinck. William Goldman (the “abridging” author) calls his story the “Good Parts” version.

And the “Good Parts” version is very good: a wonderful, tongue-in-cheek tale that takes traditional fantasy elements and twists them into a sharp-edged, witty parody, but does it with such obvious love for the genre, that it's almost inconceivable (I had to say it!) that the story couldn't find a place in any fantasy reader's heart. After all, who wouldn't delight in such wry, authorial asides as, “This was after stew, but then so is everything.”?

Goldman's version is framed by an “autobiographical” introduction of how, when he was sick as a child, his father read him the original book (S Morgenstern's *Classic Tale Of True Love And High Adventure*), and this transformed him from a sports-mad kid to a voracious bookworm (who grew up to be a multi-talented, award-winning writer). Goldman says it wasn't until he gave his own son the original (and was surprised he didn't like it) that he actually read the book himself. He then realised his father had left out the “serious side” (a supposed satiric history about the decline of Western monarchy), and had only read him “the action stuff, the good parts”. At that point he decided to write down this version.



In all, it's a rather brilliant and fun piece of metafiction

Of course, for those in the know (which is anyone who does a quick internet search) there is no original Morgenstern, and Goldman doesn't have a son (he has two daughters; their requests for stories of princesses and brides the real inspiration behind the book), and the majority of Goldman's introduction is, like Buttercup and Westley's tale of True Love, pure fantasy. Goldman continues this conceit by interspersing the story with “notes” that explain how and why he's abridged “Morgenstern's original”, and in which he constantly breaks the fourth wall, tipping us the wink that we're reading a fairytale about a fairytale. In all, it's a rather brilliant and fun piece of

metafiction. It's also an elegant way for Goldman to summarise the boring bits and as the “notes” often interrupt the narrative at a crucial moment they also hook us hard, making us desperate to find out What Happens Next.

The plot, action-packed and full of all sorts of wonderful scenes (the Cliffs of Insanity and the Zoo of Death are but two), could be considered the weak part of the tale (particularly once our intrepid heroes band together to storm the castle) but, as happy coincidences abound (Inigo hearing the death scream), and opportune props appear (holocaust cloak, anyone?), Goldman really has his tongue even more firmly lodged in his cheek, and the obvious plotoles add even more humorous grist to the mill.

The real gems of the story are, as with all classics, the characters. In the film, which brought the book a larger audience and cult status (though now it's 25 years old it looks a little dated; read the book first to appreciate it best) the actors have a definite twinkle in their eyes and, of course, it has a hilarious skit by the incomparable Peter Cook. But in the book Goldman writes them straight, letting their quirky traits and snarky, witty banter speak for itself. And as we get to know them, especially Fezzik (“I cannot help being the biggest and strongest...”), Inigo (“Hello, my name is Inigo Montoya ...”), and Westley (“As you wish”), and discover what passions live in their hearts, they find their way deep into our own. **SFX**

Suzanne McLeod's latest novel is The Shifting Price Of Prey, the fourth Spellcrackers book, on sale now.

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE!

The Silent Gondoliers by S Morgenstern (William Goldman) (1983)

Haunting memories of the world's greatest singing gondoliers kick off the tale of Luigi, a tone-deaf boatman.



Going Postal by Terry Pratchett (2004)

A satirical, witty, and ultimately heartwarming story of letters, stamps, pins, injustice, redemption, a con-man, romance, and a chain-smoking activist.



YOUR OPINIONS

Join the debate at
<http://forum.sfx.co.uk>

► Usually the book is better; I read this before I'd seen the film and it's a great book but the asides and comments from Goldman annoyed me – yes, I could have skipped them but what if there was something important/interesting in there? So I think this is the first book where I prefer the film.

Rising_Ape

► In many ways it's the geekiest book I have ever read. A real geek's book, looking at how we see the books we read when we were younger and how we interpret them when we are older.

hammard

► The book is sterile and none of the characters are particularly pleasant, other than Fezzik. It's poorly paced due to Goldman's own (often smug) notes, and probably a better read if you haven't seen the movie.

daithiard

► One of the rare occasions where I prefer the film to the book. The book, I felt, lacked a lot of the charm and pacing of the film. I've read it just once, and was quite disappointed.

Boo

► It's worth noting that the film and book aren't supposed to be doing the same thing necessarily. The film may be a subversion of the classic fairytale, but the book is a subversion of the modern fantasy novel. Yes, they use the same story, but don't actually parody the same thing.

Fitzoliver.J

► The book is quaint and a little bit funny but has none of the fantasy, humour and warmth the film had. Possibly a touch too cynical.

runalong



GET READING!

In issue 235, author Jaine Fenn will be leading us in a discussion of CJ Cherryh's Hugo Award-winning *Downbelow Station*.

NEXT ISSUE

Harry Harrison's 1961 classic *The Stainless Steel Rat* falls under Gareth L Powell's microscope.

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OVERVIEW

Avengers Round-Up

A new dawn for the superhero franchise

Avengers

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

\$3.99 | Publisher: Marvel

Writer: Jonathan Hickman

Artists: Jerome Opena, Dean White, Adam Kubert, Frank Martin

New Avengers

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

\$3.99 | Publisher: Marvel

Writer: Jonathan Hickman

Artists: Steve Epting, Rick Magyar

IN THE WORLD OF COMICS, taking over from a massive success is never easy, especially when the comic franchise in question also spearheaded 2012's biggest superhero movie. Brian Michael Bendis may have steered the Avengers for the past eight years, but now it's Jonathan Hickman's turn to take the helm of the franchise – and while it'd be understandable for him to be intimidated, there's absolutely no trace of it in the resulting big-scale stories.

Hickman's newly relaunched *Avengers* and *New Avengers* are as expansive and brainy as you'd expect from his recently concluded epic run on *Fantastic Four*. These two comics are the core of the newly spruced-up Marvel NOW! universe, and Hickman's first eight fortnightly issues have stamped a distinct new feel onto the super-team franchise.

Avengers gets off to a spectacular start, with Captain America declaring the team "needs to be bigger", just as a trio of god-like aliens on Mars start rewriting Earth's environment. The resulting smackdown is crammed with conceptual strangeness and breathtaking action, all stunningly realised by artist Jerome Opena.

Hickman's approach is intelligent and provocative, but away from the epic action this three-issue debut story goes too much for the head rather than the heart. Thankfully, the standalone adventures in issues four and five hit the correct balance of sci-fi wonder and character.

There's heaps of potential in the newly remixed *Avengers*, although

Hickman seems more comfortable over in the darker territory of *New Avengers*. Here, the focus is on the Illuminati, the shadowy cabal of major-league superheroes who operate behind the scenes of the Marvel Universe.

The mix of darker themes, intense characterisation and cosmic intrigue is backed up strongly by Steve Epting's classically styled pencils, and the first three issues of *NA* set up a genuinely challenging superhero epic. These two titles make for a fierce one-two punch of quality comic-book action, although they aren't the easiest jumping-on point for new readers or fans of the Joss Whedon movie.

Hickman's dense, intelligent style doesn't leave room for many recaps, meaning those not up to date with the history of the Infinity Gauntlet or the identity of Captain Universe might be lost. However, for those willing to play catch-up, this is a very impressive start. **Saxon Bullock**

? *New Avengers* issue three is a first step towards Marvel's summer crossover event, featuring cosmic supervillain Thanos.



OVERVIEW

Nowhere Men

The Beatles: The Science Years

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

\$2.99 | Publisher: Image

Writer: Eric Stephenson

Artists: Nate Bellegarde, Jordie Bellaire



SCI-FI FANS,

rejoice: we're currently undergoing a small renaissance of SF-themed comics, with the likes of *Saga*,

Prophet and *The Manhattan Projects*. Many of these are coming from Image Comics, whose latest ongoing series continues the trend, re-imagining science as "the new rock and roll" in an intriguing, gorgeously designed thriller.

Paralleling the lives of the Beatles, it's the story of Worldcorp, a corporation set up by four genius scientists who became superstars and for a short period redefined what was possible, before splitting acrimoniously. Now, decades later, one of their number has let a project get out of hand, and the world may end up transformed by the consequences.

The slow-burning story has plenty of potential and delivers eye-catching setpieces, even if after three issues the plot still hasn't quite kicked into gear. Fans of Jonathan Hickman will find plenty to like in this brainy tech-thriller, and Nate Bellegarde's intricate art is backed up well by Jordie Bellaire's excellent colours.

What's most impressive is the presentation of each issue, with newspaper articles, book excerpts and even adverts for fake Stanley Kubrick movies lending the story a *Watchmen*-like sense of detail and expansiveness. With a bit more storytelling clarity this'd be a must. But while *Nowhere Men* will probably read better in collections than it does as single issues, it's still a stylish series that's worthy of your attention. **Saxon Bullock**

? Writer Eric Stephenson has scripted comics like *Youngblood*, but he's also the main publisher at Image Comics.

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OVERVIEW

Bedlam

A darker knight



Release Date: OUT NOW!

\$3.50 | Publisher: Image

Writer: Nick Spencer

Artist: Riley Rossmo



NICK SPENCER

never got to write *Batman* during his short stint at DC, but if he had, chances are it would have turned out something like his latest ongoing Image series. For not only does the fictional titular city of *Bedlam* closely resemble Gotham, but Madder Red – its sinister serial killer supervillain – initially comes across as a more demented and calculating version of the Clown Prince of Crime.

After making his name with *Morning Glories'* bravura plot twists, Spencer has garnered a reputation for deftly wrong-footing the reader. After dedicating most of *Bedlam's* double-sized first issue to Madder



Red's historic final death spree, in which he literally loses count of his victims, the story shifts to the present to focus on his apparently reformed alter ego, Fillmore Press. After the furore surrounding Channel 4's *Utopia*, let's hope the tabloid hacks don't set their sights on *Bedlam* next, as Madder Red's brutality towards his young victims is unflinchingly depicted.

More reminiscent of *The Wire's* deeply nuanced narrative than the visceral thrills of serial killer drama *The Following*, this isn't always an easy book to follow – Spencer

sometimes bogs things down with too text. He downplays the superheroic elements in favour of developing Filmore's burgeoning partnership with police detective Ramira Acevedo, while the unnamed caped crusader glanced in #1 isn't properly introduced until #3's final page.

Best read in large chunks rather than individual instalments, *Bedlam* is a slow grower that will eventually win you over. **Stephen Jewell**

? Spencer says *Bedlam* is what you'd get if you shoved towns like Cincinnati, Detroit and Cleveland into "a big megacity".

GRAPHIC NOVEL

Mean Team

Future sport goes bonkers



Release Date: 14 March

£13.99 | 162 pages | Publisher: Rebellion

Writers: John Wagner, Alan Grant, Alan Hebden, Hillary Robinson

Artists: Massimo Belladirelli, Ron Smith



2000 AD REMAINS

one of the greatest anthology comics ever published, but for every stone-cold classic, there's a less

remarkable tale that doesn't stick as well in the memory. Published between 1985 and 1989, this action romp was one of *2000 AD's* many cheerful rip-offs of pop culture hits, remixing '70s future-sport movie *Rollerball* into an even more violent and extreme adventure.

Initially written by *Dredd* scripters John Wagner and Alan Grant, the story follows the Mean Team, the toughest players of the ultra-violent sport Death-Bowl, as they decide they've had enough of



alien slavery and make a break for freedom. Led by the brutal Bad Jack Keller, they make it all the way back to Earth – at which point Alan Hebden takes over as writer and the story goes utterly mental, as the Mean Team end up battling satanic monsters in an oddball fantasy adventure.

It's fun but massively uneven, with Massimo Belladirelli's wonderfully grotesque old-school artwork the main attraction. After an unexpected climactic twist, we also

get "Survivor", an entertaining follow-up written by Hillary Robinson that focuses purely on Mean Team member Henry Moon, a human telepath trapped in a panther's body. Artist Ron Smith gives the story lots of character, but it feels like the first chapter of a saga that was never continued. Despite the plentiful violence and attitude to be found in this collection, *Mean Team* falls short of the energy and charm of *2000 AD's* best output.

Saxon Bullock

? Late Italian artist Belladirelli started his career in animation, and cited Disney's *Fantasia* as one of his biggest influences.



COLLECTION

The Adventures Of Superhero Girl

Crime-fighting funnies



Release Date: OUT NOW!

112 pages | £12.99

Writer/artist: Faith Erin Hicks

Publisher: Dark Horse



BACK IN

2010, comic creator Faith Erin Hicks began

a weekly strip for her local paper in Halifax, Nova Scotia, working in black and white, with a fixed size and regular deadlines. As Hicks posted each comic on her website, the rest of the world also got to enjoy this tale of a Canadian girl in a small city, doing her best to fight crime, beat the supervillains and get out of the shadow of Kevin, her famous superhero older brother. The series went on hiatus last year as Hicks moved on to other projects, but all 100 strips have now been coloured and collected into a hardback book.

Described by Hicks as about "a girl and her life and she just happened to be a superhero", the strips are a charming look at the mundanities of superhero life: just how awkward it is when you meet people from work (ninjas, in this case) while grocery shopping, or how much easier it is to catch criminals when they're laughing at your terrible hand-knitted top. "I can lift objects ten times my size!" Superhero Girl proclaims. "So can ants," replies Skeptical Guy.

The colour added for this publication isn't essential (the originals certainly weren't lacking in anything), but it's still a nice touch. From the obligatory origin story to Superhero Girl's clashes with Spectacle Girl and her evil future self, it's all here, and well worth a read. It's the perfect thing to adorn geeky coffee tables everywhere. **Rhian Drinkwater**

? You can still view the original black and white comics online at superherogirladventures.blogspot.co.uk.

Aliens: Colonial Marines

The *Alien 3* you always wanted?

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

£37.99 | Format reviewed: PC

Also available on: Xbox 360, PS3, and Wii U

Publisher: Sega



WHAT HAPPENS

between *Aliens* and *Alien 3*? *Colonial Marines* fills in the blanks, and sees you revisiting famous locations from the *Alien* saga, including the USS Sulaco, Hadley's Hope and the Space Jockey's derelict ship. They've done a superb job recreating the look and feel of the films, but the game captures none of their claustrophobia or tension.

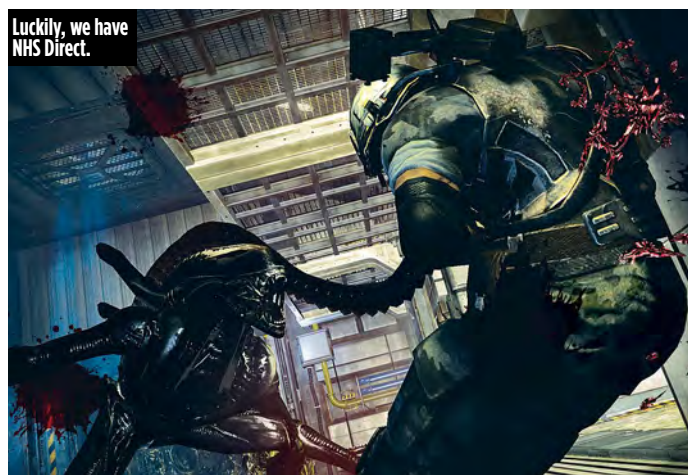
You don't see a Xenomorph in *Aliens* for around an hour; in *Colonial Marines* you're fighting hordes of them almost instantly. In the films they're cunning and resourceful; in the game they're little more than dumb animals, charging at you. This could have been a great horror game,

but instead it's a brainless and repetitive shooter.

Developers Gearbox have handled the license well, though. Lance Henriksen and Michael Biehn reprise their roles as Bishop and Hicks, and the game is full of references that, as fans, we couldn't help but enjoy. The

weapons are perfect, and the roar of the pulse rifle is exactly as you remember it. On the Sulaco you find Bishop's severed legs, complete with milky android blood. It's clear the developers love the films.

The warm glow of nostalgia doesn't last forever, though. Between



all the moments of fan pleasing there's a lot of tiresome shooting to endure. They even introduce human enemies early in the game, which is just baffling. There are some attempts to bring variety to the action, including sections where you stomp around in the iconic Power Loader, but mostly it's just moving from corridor to corridor, joylessly mowing down waves of Xenomorphs.

Some missions do come close to capturing the feel of *Aliens*' most memorable moments. One section sees you defending a control room in Hadley's Hope from packs of Xenomorphs, backed up by computerised sentry guns. In another you use the M56 Smartgun to clear out an infested underground tunnel.

The new story written for the game is enjoyable enough, but doesn't come close to the quality of the films, and some of the dialogue is laughably bad. But if you love *Aliens*, you may forgive the game's shortcomings, just for a chance to experience Cameron and Scott's universe again. Otherwise, this is a woefully average shooter with a few decent setpieces. **Andy Kelly**

🔍 Legendary Hollywood concept artist and "visual futurist" Syd Mead was hired by Gearbox to help design the game's levels.

Dead Space 3

The tension's been put on ice

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

£39.99 | Format reviewed: Xbox 360

Also available on: PS3 and PC

Publisher: EA



DEAD SPACE 3 IS

a rambling love letter to John Carpenter's *The Thing*. The series has always had Rob Bottin's creature designs in mind with its Necromorph monstrosities, but the third entry takes the homage further than ever. Tentacled dogs, disembodied spider-heads and a plethora of snow-suited terrors roaming a deadly ice planet mean *Dead Space 3* is just a MacReady away from an official tie-in.

Though the game's opening act takes place in the now familiar, vent-riddled mix of spaceships and futuristic cities, returning engineer Isaac Clarke and his companions eventually crash-land onto a frozen planet. The ice is hiding a raft of new features: human enemies, weapon customisation, rappelling action sequences and a co-op



campaign introducing new protagonist John Carver.

All these additions have resulted in one major subtraction: horror. The Necromorphs continue to burst out of air ducts (and snowdrifts) but rising moments of terror are rare. Instead of handing you a cutting tool and limited ammo, the game sees you tooled up with extra-powerful guns and handed masses of ammo.

It's a numbing prospect for long-term fans. Huge explosions and impressive vistas might wow newcomers and action seekers, but that brilliant survival horror game where you tip-toed through the shadows and desperately tried to dismember the horrors that caught you off guard? It's been left out in the cold. **Matthew Pellett**

🔍 To discover the origin story of John Carver you'll need to read graphic novel *Dead Space: Liberation*, written by Ian Edginton.

Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance

More fun than a paper cut

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

£39.99 | Format reviewed: PS3

Also available on: Xbox 360 and PC

Publisher: Konami



EVERY ACTION

game needs a hook to set it apart from the crowd and *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*'s unique selling point is a cut above: unrestricted slicing freedom. Cyborg star Raiden carries a sword capable of cleaving through almost everything and everyone in the game.

Not fond of a tree? Snick! Plagued by missile fire from troops on a walkway? Slice through the supports and bring the walkway tumbling down. Squeeze L1 first, trigger slowmotion and control the angle of every swipe with the right stick.

It's largely new territory for the espionage-focused *Metal Gear* series, and though there are some stealth sections, they're fairly rudimentary. *Revengeance* is concerned mainly



with action porn as it rattles through epic boss battles and setpieces at a million miles an hour.

Without its cutting system *Revengeance* would be an ordinary and painfully short (four hours minus cutscenes) action game with *Metal Gear* trappings. The actual scrapping boils down to very basic combos and parries.

Regardless, the aforementioned cutting system adds something special. Hacking off body parts for research materials, chopping up projectiles before they can flatten your face into the concrete... it's the little moments that'll linger in the memory long after the frustrations about the game's brevity and pantomime villains have faded.

Matthew Pellett

🔍 The game had over two years' troubled development at Kojima until it was handed to PlatinumGames for a total do-over.



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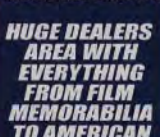
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AUDIO CDs

Doctor Who

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Destiny Of The Doctor: Shadow Of Death

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

60 minutes | £10.20 (CD)/£9.99 (download)

Publisher: AudioGO

The Sands Of Life

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

60 minutes | £10.99 (CD)/£9.99 (download)

Publisher: Big Finish

Spaceport Fear

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

120 minutes | £14.99 (CD)/£12.99 (download)

Publisher: Big Finish

THE CELEBRATIONS OF

Who's 50th anniversary year continue, as AudioGO's eleven-part series *Destiny Of The Doctor* hits its second instalment. *Shadow Of Death* follows the '60s TARDIS crew of the Second Doctor, Jamie (Frazer Hines, who narrates the story) and Zoe as they visit a distant planet orbiting a pulsar, where they find a human science team apparently being hunted by a terrifying alien force.

This atmospheric tale does a good job of melding old-school '60s adventure with a very new-*Who* approach to temporal weirdness,

and Hines does a great job with the narration; it's just a shame that the connections between the *Destiny Of The Doctor* stories are still pretty threadbare so far.

Elsewhere, Big Finish's new season of Tom Baker-starring Fourth Doctor adventures continues with *The Sands Of Life*. The action sees the Doctor and Romana I (Mary Tamm) running into trouble thanks to a trans-dimensional swarm of aliens in the Sahara desert, and while the tone veers uncertainly from dark drama to witty romp, there are plenty of entertaining moments, with both Baker and Tamm on top form.

Finally, there's the second part of Big Finish's latest Sixth Doctor trilogy. In *Spaceport Fear*, the Doctor and Mel arrive at a bizarre spaceport on an alien world that's been in lockdown for 400 years, and quickly become involved in the ongoing war between the tribes of Business and Economy. The plot owes an obvious debt to both the 1987 TV story "Paradise Towers" and *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, but also finds plenty of twists to explore while adding offbeat characterisation and creative worldbuilding. Despite losing a little momentum in the final episode, this is a strong example of creative and atmospheric *Who* storytelling at its best. **Saxon Bullock**

Out on 7 March: a reading of "The Tomb Of The Cybermen", and *Destiny Of The Doctor* three, *Vengeance Of The Stones*.

AUDIO CD

Blake's 7: Warship

The malcontent seven ride again

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

60 minutes | £12.99 (CD)/£9.99 (download)

Publisher: Big Finish

Cast: Gareth Thomas, Paul Darrow, Michael Keating, Sally Knyvette, Jan Chappell, Jacqueline Pearce, Alistair Lock

THE US TV REBOOT OF

cult BBC space adventure *Blake's 7* may still be in development, but Big Finish's range of *B7* audio releases get a major boost here with its first full-cast drama. *Warship* reunites most of the show's original cast (Peter Tuddenham, voice of Zen and Orac, is sadly no longer with us), while also filling a hole in *B7* continuity by finally showing how Roj Blake (Gareth Thomas) left the crew of the *Liberator*, an event that occurred offscreen between seasons two and three.

The story here fills in the action after season two's epic finale "Star One". With a deadly alien fleet poised to unleash destruction across the Federation, the only thing standing in its way is the *Liberator*, but the crew has plenty of other problems on their hands – including



an attack from alien limpet-mines, and the dangerous attentions of Servalan (Jacqueline Pearce)...

Warship captures the correct mix of edgy characterisation and charmingly dated sci-fi, fitting seamlessly with the style of the original series while also giving the cast plenty to do. Paul Darrow once again steals the show as the brainy and amoral Avon, but while this is certainly a must-buy for fans, it's also extremely talky, and the multi-stranded story struggles to cohere at times. There's an unavoidable sense of "joining the narrative dots" to *Warship*, but despite its flaws there's still plenty of nostalgic, old-fashioned SF entertainment to be found here.

Saxon Bullock

There's another *B7* novel coming from Big Finish in May: written by Paul Darrow, *Lucifer* is set after the show's finale.

AUDIO CD

Vienna: The Memory Box

Ultra fox

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

65 minutes | £5

Publisher: Big Finish

"OH MY GOSH, I WAS

blown away!" gushes *DS9's* Chase Masterson during an interview on this release, discussing how she felt when asked to reprise the role of Vienna Salvatori – who first appeared in a *Doctor Who* audio – in her very own spin-off.

You can understand her keenness; after all, who wouldn't want their own Big Finish series? Especially when you're playing a bounty hunter who specialises in snarky banter, getting out of tricky situations and wearing thigh-high boots.

This light yet pleasing debut is a whodunnit which features two Law Enforcement Officers chasing Vienna from planet to planet as they try to nail her for killing a mega-rich businessman. Is she really that cold-blooded and evil, or simply an opportunist? The dialogue's witty,



the plot's so twisty-turny that Agatha Christie could take notes, and Masterson's performance is so perky she sounds as though she drank ten cups of coffee beforehand.

There are downsides. A bumbling minor character is so laid-back he becomes an irritation, and the finale's uncomfortably close to the moment in an am-dram production where the police inspector arrives to unmask the murderer.

Thankfully, these small script weaknesses are made up for by high production values. *The Memory Box* is an hour of storytelling that you'll enjoy – and you're left wanting to hear more. Then again, as Vienna says: "Nobody hears my name and lives to tell the tale." That's us dead, then. **Meg Wilde**

Writer Jonathan Morris received so many requests to bring back the Silthegge from his *Flip-Flop* that one has a cameo here.

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Box Of Delights

What we've been playing with this month

Herman Munster Figure

Diamond Select | Height: 21.5cm | £15.99 (RRP £17.99)

An action figure of the loveable 7' 3" lunk from classic horror sitcom *The Munsters*. It feels odd seeing Herman in colour, almost as odd as seeing Superman in black and white – but then, the series' original pitch presentation was in colour, so we know the greenish tint to his skin is correct. Herman comes with a capacious bag, and some of the parts you need to build his electric chair – you'll have to buy the other two figures in the range (Herman's wife Lily and Grandpa) to get all of the pieces, though.

Alien Chopsticks

Katobukiya | Length: 22cm | £9.99 a pair

The most quease-inducing products we've seen for some time, these Japanese utensils allow you to shovel egg fried rice into your facehole using likenesses of Ridley Scott's creature in its various stages of development. From left to right we have the facehugger, the adult Xenomorph and the chestbuster. The latter is the most revolting, because the colouring and segmented markings down the shaft make it feel like you're holding an earthworm with rigor mortis. If you're looking for some help sticking to a diet, a pair of these might be a wise investment!

Deluxe Batpod

Hot Toys | £249.99

This detailed one-sixth-scale model of the Dark Knight's ride is definitely one for the minted Batman connoisseur. It has light-up headlights, powered by three AAA batteries. We had to use some photographic trickery to make the handlebars stand up, as they're designed to fit snugly onto the arms of the deluxe Batman figure. Sadly, you'll have to splash out another £299 for him; alternatively, there's a deluxe Catwoman who will fit on it too.

Nick Fury Bobble-Head

Pop! | Height: 10cm | £9.99

Not only is Nick Fury a tough cookie, but he's played by Samuel L Jackson, the ultimate thespian bad motherlover. So nice though it is to have a springy-necked simulacra of him, it does feel a little like Jackson might burst in at any moment and "strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger" for disrespecting his badass image.

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OF A
KIND

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Han's furry friend is covered too, and there's also R2-D2 and Stormtrooper designs. All are a cotton/polyester mix, and come in sizes ranging from small to Eaten-Way-Too-Many-Pies.



CAPTAIN AMERICA

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This Marvel hoodie is our favourite. The bold primary colours have a clean, pop art appeal, and the hood with Cap's iconic "A" on it doesn't look too silly when it's up.



New 52 Figures

Mattel | Height: 16cm-17.5cm | £17.99 each (RRP £19.99)

Ah, the New 52, remember that? It seems like forever since we had a huge "Everything changes!" comic event like that. Do you think DC will ever do one again? Probably not. Anyhow, here we have the Flash, who comes with three clip-on bits of energy, and a rather smug-looking Superman (as he appeared in the pages of *Justice League*). Also available are Wonder Woman, Hawkman, Aquaman, Darkseid, a DC Unlimited Superman and a Justice League Batman. Coming soon: Green Arrow and a Batman Unlimited Batman.



Captain America Trading Cards

EFX Collectibles | £34.99 (RRP £49.99)

Not your usual prop replica: reproductions of the vintage trading cards treasured by Captain America fan Agent Coulson, as seen in *The Avengers*. Note that the four cards pictured above are just a small sample of what you get for your money. There are 20 cards in all - two sets of the same ten. One is in "near mint" condition, while the other is stained with Coulson's blood. Neat idea, although we can't help thinking that the RRP is a mite cheeky, considering how little they must have cost to produce.

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DOCTOR WHO TRAVEL MUGS

ETA: APRIL

Keep your hot drinks hot and your cold drinks cool while you're on the road (or in the time vortex) with one of these babies. Manufactured by Bif Bang Pow, they can hold 16 ounces of your favourite beverage. As you can see, there are two designs. One features a wrap-around image of the Fourth Doctor's outfit, the other the Eleventh Doctor's costume.



EXPECT TO PAY
£80

ADAM WEST ACTION FIGURE

ETA: MAY

Holy quarter-scale figure with 20 points of articulation! It seems like Batman figures come out every month, but we can't recall the last time we saw one based on the camp '60s TV show. Manufactured by Neca, this quarter-scale figure stands 18 inches tall and comes with interchangeable hands and a "functioning utility belt" - but, sadly, not a canister of shark-repellant bat-spray.



EXPECT TO PAY
£13

ZOMBIE EGG CUPS

ETA: AUGUST

Get your hand in for the undead head caving-in you'll be doing when the inevitable zombie apocalypse comes by practising on your breakfast! These two zombie egg cups come as a pair; lift the top off to pop your boiled egg inside. They're dual-purpose too, since holes in the top of their skulls mean you can also use them as a salt and pepper set.

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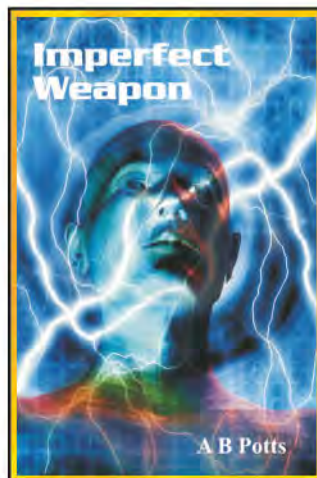
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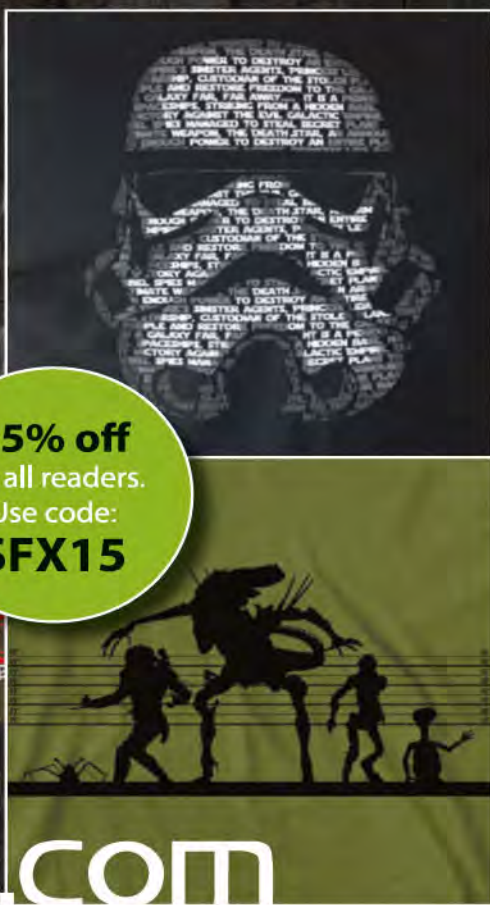
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With thanks to Colin MacNeil for the illustration. Design by Y14 Studios www.y14.co.uk

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Ziggy Stardust



RUSSELL LEWIN, PRODUCTION EDITOR

"TO BE PLAYED AT MAXIMUM VOLUME" reads the legendary line on the back of David Bowie's brilliant 1971 album, *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From*

Mars (to give it its full title).

But hang on to yourself, what's a music LP doing in *SFX*, I hear you cry. Ah, but it's SF, I contend. There now follows my evidence why this record, made in the shadow of *A Clockwork Orange*, is equally as valid an SF classic as that film is.

The album opens with "Five Years", a song about the coming of the end of the world – "News guy wept and told us, Earth was really dying". The song reaches an awesome climax, beginning with the words "And it was cold and it rained so I felt like an actor / And I thought of Ma and I wanted to get

back there" before the "five years" refrain. 'Tis the beginning of the end.

The next song to pick up the theme is "Moonage Daydream" in which Bowie sings "I'm the space invader": he creates the character of Ziggy, a hedonistic alien who comes to give us relief in the last years of Earth's existence.

Perhaps the album's best known song is "Starman". Bowie said of it, "Ziggy is advised in a dream by the infinites to write the coming of a Starman, so he writes 'Starman', which is the first news of hope that the people have heard."

Mid-album songs like "Lady Stardust", "Star" and "Hang On To Yourself" thrillingly celebrate a euphoric mania, before the inevitable

comedown. The song "Ziggy Stardust" marks the decline ("he took it all too far" (but boy, could he play guitar, as those famous riffs demonstrate)). Next track, the sublime "Suffragette City" even mentions *Clockwork Orange*'s "droogies" ("you can't crash here"), before epic finale "Rock 'N' Roll Suicide" sees a washed-up Ziggy, a victim of excess but still pleading, "Give me your hands!"

It's SF alright. It also contains some of the greatest pop music ever made. If you don't already own it, buy it. Then play it at maximum volume. **SFX**

FACT ATTACK!

- ▶ The excellent *Aladdin Sane* was the follow up to *Ziggy Stardust*, and then in 1974 *Diamond Dogs* appeared, a similarly sci-fi themed concept album inspired by George Orwell's *1984*.
- ▶ The photographs on the front and back of the album were both taken in Haddon Street in London, just off Regent Street. There's now a plaque there to mark its fame.

- ▶ Mott the Hoople's Bowie interpretation "All The Young Dudes" is actually part of the *Ziggy Stardust* concept – "the news" is Ziggy telling youths that there's no electricity to play any more rock 'n' roll.
- ▶ David Bowie of course went on to star in genre films like *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, *The Hunger*, *Labyrinth* and *The Prestige*.

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH! WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL DETAILS ON PAGE 29

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